# EUROPE'S MOST WANTED COACHES
THE MEN BEHIND THIS SEASON'S SURPRISE TEAMS

# World Soccer®

GLOBAL FOOTBALL SINCE 1960

December 2016

*Exclusive interview*

# LUIS SUAREZ
Golden Shoe winner on life on Barcelona's frontline

## Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG
*Where next for Dortmund's top gun?*

EYEWITNESS

## MARIO'S REBOOT
Balotelli and the Nice revival

CLUB FOCUS

## ATLETICO NACIONAL
Spotlight on Colombia's finest

*plus* ICELAND // CARLOS ALBERTO RIP // AFRICAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

WWW.UKSOCCERSHOP.COM
INFO@UKSOCCERSHOP.COM - 0844 332 1221

# UKSOCCERSHOP

NUMBER ONE FOR FOOTBALL SHIRTS

## SHIRT PRINTING

Customise this season's new shirts from Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern, England, Ajax, Catalunya and more in the latest printing styles!

## NEXT DAY DELIVERY

DHL NEXT DAY DELIVERY TO UK, EUROPE AND USA. REST OF THE WORLD: 2/3 DAYS. FULLY TRACKABLE SHIPPING TO EVERY COUNTRY!

## NEW 2016-17 CLUB SHIRTS

**MAN UTD 3RD**
(IBRAHIMOVIC 9)
**£69.99**

**MAN CITY HOME**
(SANE 19)
**£69.99**

**CHELSEA AWAY**
(HAZARD 10)
**£69.99**

**LIVERPOOL 3RD**
(COUTINHO 10)
**£69.99**

**DORTMUND HOME**
(GOTZE 10)
**£69.99**

**JUVENTUS HOME**
(HIGUAIN 9)
**£69.99**

**BAYERN HOME**
(SANCHES 35)
**£69.99**

**PSG HOME**
(CAVANI 9)
**£75.00**

**ICELAND HOME**
(G.SIGURDSSON 10)
**£75.00**

**INTER MILAN HOME**
(ICARDI 9)
**£75.00**

WWW.UKSOCCERSHOP.COM

WorldSoccer
Global football intelligence since 1960

# Contents

December 2016

## FEATURES

**44 Player Biography**
Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

**58 Special Feature**
Europe's most wanted coaches

**66 Club Focus**
Atletico Nacional


## THE WORLD THIS MONTH
People in the news...on and off the pitch

4 **In pictures**
10 **From the Editor**
12 **Carlos Alberto 1944-2016** obituary
16 **Keir Radnedge** the 48-team World Cup
20 **Ins & Outs** people on the move
22 **Brian Glanville** managerial giants exposed

## EYEWITNESS
24 **France** Balotelli and Nice hit the ground running
26 **South Africa** Sundowns triumph
28 **Iceland** following on from the Euros
30 **Nicaragua** targetting the Gold Cup
32 **Italy** Icardi fans the flames at Inter
34 **Kosovo** Europe's newest nation

## 6 OF THE BEST
40 **Home-grown revelations**

## TACTICS
42 **International football's decline**

## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
50 **France's new coach**

## FACE TO FACE
54 **Luis Suarez**

## PICTURE ESSAY
74 **Futsal World Cup**

## TALENT SCOUT
78 **Full-backs**

## ARCHIVES
80 **December 2000**

## THE GREAT MATCHES
98 **Bulgaria v Germany, 1994**

12

26

40

54

Follow World Soccer online

FOOTBALL 24-7

Follow @worldsoccermag  Like World Soccer Magazine

SAVE MONEY ON WorldSoccer
Exclusive subscription offer.
See page 8

## World Service

**Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents**

90

**85 South America** Libertadores Cup revamp
**86 China** World Cup winner takes charge
**88 Mexico** Osorio under growing pressure
**90 Bangladesh** disappointment yet again

PLUS **84 Global diary** **92 Results, tables, fixtures**

# In Pictures

**The global game caught on camera**

**EGYPT...fans of South African side Mamelodi Sundowns prior to the start of the CAF Champions League Final away leg against Zamalek**

COLOMBIA...Uruguay's Egidio Arevalo Rios attempts a bicycle kick under the watch of Colombia's Edwin Cardona (left) and Abel Aguilar

QATAR... Al Ain's Fawzi Fayez celebrates a goal for the UAE side in their AFC Champions League semi-final second leg match away to El Jaish

ITALY...Milan's Carlos Bacca celebrates in front of his club's fans after Chievo's Dario Dainelli scores an own goal

**BRAZIL...Gabriel Jesus of Brazil celebrates after scoring against Bolivia in a World Cup qualifier**

**ENGLAND...Angelo Ogbonna (left) and Winston Reid of West Ham United get the better of Crystal Palace's Connor Wickham**

**ARGENTINA...Estudiantes defend a free-kick from Fernando Belluschi of San Lorenzo**

**PICTURES OF THE MONTH QR CODE**

To see more of the best photos from the month, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the images by logging on to http://po.st/Yxayxy

# For the perfect Christmas gift, subscribe and SAVE UP TO 40%

PAY ONLY £3.08 PER ISSUE

Subscribe online at
**magazinesdirect.com/BPU6**

**Complete the coupon opposite**

THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE: This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits · If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Time Inc. (UK) Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Time Inc. (UK) Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request. · If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society – If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Time Inc. (UK) Ltd asks you to · You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

# Your full subscription package includes:

- Pay less than at the newsagent
- 13 issues a year delivered direct to your door
- Every subscription package includes access to the iPad/ iPhone version at no extra cost*
- Enjoy exclusive offers with Rewards. Visit worldsoccer.com/rewards
- Order a gift subscription by email or post and you'll be sent a Christmas card to give with your gift**

**0330 333 1113**

**Quote code: BPU6**

**7 days a week from 8am and 9pm (UK time)**

** A Christmas card will be sent to all gift orders received by 9th December 2016 (either by email or post) so that you can send it on to the recipient before Christmas. If you supply an email address your order will be acknowledged by email and you will be given the option to download a Christmas card or request one by post. If you do not supply an email address you will automatically be sent a postal Christmas card.

Complete this order form and send to:

**FREEPOST Time Inc**

(No further address needed. No stamp required – for UK only)

## YES! I would like to subscribe to World Soccer

*Please tick your preferred payment method:*

☐ UK Direct Debit - **Pay only £19.99** every six months, SAVING YOU 40% (full price £33.40) — TOP OFFER

☐ 2 years (26 issues) Credit Card- **Pay only £79.99** (full price £133.58) saving 40% across the two years

☐ 1 year (13 issues) Credit card- **Pay only £42.99** (full price £66.79) saving 35% across the year

**FOR OUR READERS NOT LIVING IN THE UK:**
View our fantastic overseas offers on
**www.magazinesdirect.com/BPU6** or
by calling **+44 330 333 1113** quoting code **BPU6**

**Your details**

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:

Surname:

Email:

Address:

Postcode:

Home Tel No: (inc.area code)

Mobile No.

Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y

**I would like to send a gift to:**

Please also fill out 'Your Details' above. To give more than one subscription, please supply address details on a separate sheet.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

**Choose from 3 easy ways to pay:**

**1. CHEQUE**

I enclose a cheque/postal order for: £ _____ made payable to Time Inc. (UK) Ltd.

**2. CREDIT/DEBIT CARD**

Please debit £ _____ from my: ☐ Amex ☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ Mastercard

Card No.

Expiry Date

M M Y Y

Signature: Date:

(I am over 18)

**3. Pay only £19.99 every six months by Direct Debit (UK only)**

**Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit**
**For office use only. Originator's reference - 764 221**

Name of Bank:

Address:

Postcode:

Account Name:

Sort Code:

Account No:

Please pay Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Time Inc. (UK) Ltd. and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature: Date:

(I am over 18)

Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only. £19.99 payable by Direct Debit every 6 months, with the price guaranteed for the first 12 months. Final closing date for all orders is **2nd February 2017**. Orders purchased as a gift before the 9th December 2016 will start with the February 2017 issue published in January. All gift orders purchased after this date will begin with the first available issue. Orders purchased for yourself will start with the next available issue – please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery, 8 weeks for overseas orders. The full subscription rate is for 1 year (13 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For enquiries and overseas rates contact help@magazinesdirect.com or call +44 (0) 330 333 4333. For full terms and conditions visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. *The digital version comes free with the print edition of your subscription and is available strictly on a trial basis. Time Inc. (UK) Ltd reserves the right to withdraw free access to the digital version at any time. The Rewards scheme is available for all active print subscribers of magazines published by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, free of charge. Full terms and conditions are available at mymagazinerewards.co.uk. Digital subscribers also get access as long as the subscription has been purchased directly through the publishers at magazinesdirect.com. We will process your data in accordance with our Privacy Policy (www.timeincuk.com/privacy). By providing your information, you agree to be contacted by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, publisher of World Soccer and other iconic media brands, with information about our goods and services and those of our carefully selected third parties. Please tick here if you do not wish to receive these messages: ☐ by email and/or SMS ☐ by post and/or telephone ☐ about carefully selected third party goods and services.

**XWS code BPU6**

# FROM THE EDITOR

International football – the lifeblood of this publication for so many years – continues to come under fire from many quarters of the game.

New FIFA president Gianni Infantino is doing his best to "out-Blatter" his predecessor with plans for a 48-team World Cup – a virtual admission that quality will be sacrificed in the dash for cash and votes.

Jonathan Wilson (page 42) laments the poor quality of football on display in the European World Cup qualifiers.

And in a month when we remember Carlos Alberto (page 12), Brazil's latest saviour is a teenager, Gabriel Jesus (page 19) who has already been snapped up by Manchester City; it remains to be seen whether he will be given time to develop his talents there.

> Despite all the apparent problems, the international game still has the capacity to enthrall

Yet despite all the apparent problems, the international game still has the capacity to enthrall. Last month, James Montague spent time with Europe's newest national side, Kosovo, and his story (page 34) is well worth reading.

The difficulties encountered by China and Qatar in recent qualifiers (page 86) are proof of the World Cup's enduring appeal. No matter how much money is thrown at their clubs, national-team success has proved far more elusive.

There is surely life in the old dog yet.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

## 10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH


1 Carlos Alberto dies ..... page 12
2 Gianni Infantino suggests a 48-team World Cup ..... pages 10 and 16
3 Brazil move top of South American World Cup qualifying ..... page 19 and 86
4 Luis Suarez receives ESM Golden Shoe ..... page 54
5 Mamelodi Sundowns win African Champions League ..... page 26
6 China sack Gao and appoint Lippi ..... page 86
7 Woruwi Makudi banned by FIFA ..... page 15
8 Nice rise to the top in France ..... page 24
9 Argentina win Futsal World Cup ..... page 74
10 Mexico coach under pressure ahead of crucial World Cup qualifier ..... page 88




SWITZERLAND

## Infantino unveils "vision" of 48-team World Cup

After a difficult first six months in charge, Gianni Infantino has outlined his vision for the future, entitled FIFA 2.0.

After the first meeting of the newly rebranded and expanded FIFA Council, which replaced the discredited Executive Committee, the FIFA president announced a proposal to expand the World Cup to 40 or 48 teams from 2026.

Infantino insisted there was a "positive" feeling towards the idea of expanding the tournament, with a decision set to be taken in January. His personal preference is for 48 teams, with 16 seeded countries, and the remaining 32 taking part in a play-off to compete in the group stage.

"Whether it will be 40 or 48, it was a positive

**Shock...Costa Rica (in white) and Italy at the last World Cup**

discussion," said Infantino. "I don't agree it will dilute the quality. I would like to remind you that in the last World Cup, England and Italy were eliminated by Costa Rica. The level of football is increasing all over the world."

Infantino dismissed concerns that the play-off teams would be forced to travel large distances.

"In a 48-team format, the quality would be higher because the 32 teams would have a play-off. The quality would improve and not decrease in any way," he insisted. "It is certainly an exciting moment for that country and the players and the fans. You don't just travel to play a friendly but a match that is extremely important.

"Look at England – one of the matches that is most followed is the play-off to get into the Premier League."

"If you're a Portuguese fan, travelling to Azerbaijan takes just as long as to go to New York, for example. It wouldn't pose any problems to supporters"

**New UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin floats the idea of playing the Champions League Final outside Europe**

UEFA

# Ceferin and Infantino broke no rules over loan

**Cleared...Aleksander Ceferin**

After an internal investigation, UEFA has found that Gianni Infantino and current UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin did not break any rules when European football's governing body arranged a multimillion euro loan to the Slovenian federation.

The €4million loan to buy a 17.3 per cent share of the state lottery Sportna loterija in June – which an internal UEFA report says was "granted in real exception" – has been scrutinised because it was signed off by Ceferin, as president of the Slovenian FA, and Infantino, then UEFA's general secretary. They have since been elected as presidents of UEFA and FIFA, respectively.

Norwegian magazine *Josimar*, which first broke the story of the loan, reported that FIFA ethics prosecutors were investigating Infantino's part in the loan. It claimed that UEFA flouted financial protocol to approve the money, and that FIFA's code of ethics prohibits individuals from investing in football gambling businesses.

"They had to try to invent some non-stories," said Ceferin. "[The loan was] as clean as possible. We asked for a loan, it was a strategic investment."

**Under scrutiny... Gianni Infantino**

# HEROES & VILLAINS

## CHRISTIAN BENTEKE

The Belgium forward scored the fastest goal in World Cup qualifying history by netting after just eight seconds as Belgium won 6-0 against Gibraltar in Group H.

**Quick...Christian Benteke (left)**

## ANDRE SILVA

Aged 20 years and 11 months the Portugal youngster eclipsed Eusebio to become his country's youngest ever scorer of a hat-trick. His three goals against Turkey in the first 37 minutes of the game, was also the quickest hat-trick by a Portuguese player from kick-off.

**Treble...Andre Silva got a hat-trick against Turkey**

## OUSMAN MANNEH

The Werder Bremen youngster, who sought asylum in Germany from the Gambia two years ago, scored his first goal for the club in a 2-1 win against Bayer Leverkusen.

## SERGE AURIER

A "Villain" last month, the PSG defender saved the life of opponent Moussa Doumbia who swallowed his tongue during Mali's clash with Ivory Coast.

**Life saver... Serge Aurier**

## TOMAS KOUBEK & LUKAS VACHA

The Sparta Prague pair had to train with the club's women's team after sexist comments about a female match official. Koubek was alleged to have said: "Women belong at the stove" after assistant ref Lucie Ratajova failed to flag an opponent offside. Vacha tweeted a picture with the comment: "To the stove."

**Wanted...Enner Valencia is carried off**

## ENNER VALENCIA

The West Ham forward left Ecuador's World Cup qualifier against Chile on a stretcher, apparently injured, and was pursued by police seeking to arrest him for alleged non-payment of child maintenance. The rest of the Ecuador squad argued with the police as Valencia was taken to the relative safety of the changing room. His lawyers later managed to convince a judge to quash the arrest warrant.

**Twerk...New England striker Kei Kamara (right)**

## KEI KAMARA

The New England Revolution forward was booked for "twerking" after he used the popular dance move as a way of celebrating his goal against Montreal Impact.

## GRAZIANO PELLE

Dropped from the Italy squad for the World Cup qualifier with Macedonia after he failed to shake hands with coach Gian Piero Ventura following his substitution during the game with Spain.

"Dear God, please take care of our '*Capitao*'. Rest In Peace"

**Pele pays tribute to Carlos Alberto**

OBITUARY

# Carlos Alberto *(1944-2016)*

Carlos Alberto, the captain of Brazil's 1970 World Cup-winning side and the scorer of the tournament's defining goal, died in October, aged 72, from a heart attack.

The defender scored one of the most memorable goals in the history of the World Cup, sealing a 4-1 win over Italy in the Final in Mexico City by completing a brilliant team move with an angled drive from the right side of the penalty area before lifting the Jules Rimet Trophy.

"I realise how beautiful and how important that goal was because everybody is still talking about it," he said years later, in an interview with the BBC.

"Nobody talks about Pele's goal, the first goal, the second goal. It is always about the fourth goal.

"I think it was the best goal ever scored in a World Cup. Anybody can score a goal, but in that move nine different players touched the ball before the goal. I was lucky though, because I scored it."

Photo: Offside/Gerry Cranham

**Best...Carlos Alberto (no4) scores against Italy in the 1970 Final**

Carlos Alberto Torres, to give him his full name, was born in Rio's Vila da Penha neighbourhood and was just 25 when he won the World Cup, making him the youngest captain to lift the trophy.

He was a gifted, attacking full-back, coming through the ranks at Fluminense before moving on to Santos, where he was a team-mate of Pele.

A regular in the Brazil side by the age of 20, he was dropped for the 1966 World Cup but was an obvious choice as skipper when the role became vacant in 1968.

By that time he was already captain of Santos and his leadership skills stood out, taking the armband ahead of more senior – and World Cup-winning – candidates.

It was a shrewd decision that was vindicated when he kissed and held aloft the Jules Rimet trophy in Mexico City's Azteca Stadium. The kissing of cups may be common now, but in this regard he was something of a pioneer.

"When I received the trophy as the captain, my first instinct was to kiss it," he said. "In fact, I was the first to do it, to kiss the trophy before lifting it up."

"When I received the trophy as the captain, my first instinct was to kiss it"

Alberto won a total of 53 caps for Brazil, retiring from international football in 1978 following a battle against persistent knee problems.

He played more than 400 games for Santos and helped them to win the Brazilian league title four times between 1967 and 1973. He also helped Fluminense secure domestic trophies before enjoying a spell with New York Cosmos in the North American Soccer League later in his career.

He moved into management at his

"The president of the CBF, Marco Polo Del Nero, has declared official mourning for three days"

**The Brazilian federation pays tribute to Carlos Alberto**

**Pundit...in May this year**

former club Flamengo, winning the Brazilian championship in 1983, as well as spending time in charge at Corinthians and Fluminense.

He also held coaching roles with Nigeria and Oman before being appointed to take over as the national boss of Azerbaijan in 2004. His time there included a 2-0 defeat to Sven Goran Eriksson's England at St James' Park in March 2005.

The World Cup-winning skipper remained a popular figure in Brazil and later worked as a commentator for TV Globo on the SporTV cable channel.

*Keir Radnedge*

# Carlos The Great

## Paul Gardner pays tribute to the greatest defender he has ever seen

Without doubt, Carlos Alberto was the most skilful, most exciting defender I have ever seen. That, however, is an opinion that many may question as it is based mostly on what I saw of him playing for New York Cosmos in the final years of his career.

At the time, in the late 1970s, early 1980s, George Best was playing in the USA and – with some exaggeration, though not too much, I think – he said of the Brazilian: "You know, Alberto is not a good tackler, he can't head the ball properly, he's not fast, he's not rugged, and he can't mark man-to-man.

"So I keep asking myself – why does he always end up with the bloody ball?"

In his mid-thirties, facing younger and quicker opponents, he would, with almost insulting ease, outfox them all.

Seemingly without exerting himself, Carlos Alberto owned the penalty area, trotting into the desperate melees and emerging with ball under control.

**Cosmos... Carlos Alberto**

How did he do it? Did even he know? He thought he did, once telling me: "I feel the play before the ball comes. I know when a player is going to make a long pass or a short pass by looking at him in his eyes. To look at the ball, that is no good, the ball can't tell you where it is going to go. I see from his eyes, that is why so often when the pass is made, I put up my foot, and the ball comes to it."

But could it be that simple? Surely there was some rare, innate football sense that Carlos Alberto possessed, a sense that ruled his still supple body and made sure he made all the right moves?

The calmness was all his own – and it was staggering.

In 1978, Cosmos were about to be eliminated from the championship and their entire season came down to Carlos Alberto's shoot-out attempt, in which a player had five seconds to dribble towards and then try to beat the goalkeeper. With Minnesota leading the shoot-out 1-0, if he missed, Cosmos were out.

Cosmos team-mate Giorgio Chinaglia recalled: "The whistle goes and we see him scoop the ball up with his foot and run forward bouncing it off his thigh.

"We couldn't believe it, we all thought he was crazy. And he scored so easily, just lifted the ball over the goalkeeper like it was a little kids' game. I swear he'd never even practised that move before."

And then, every so often, the calmness would shatter. In a 1980 game against Dallas Tornado, Cosmos were being outplayed, and a young Argentinian named Oscar Gomez was running rings around them. Alberto settled matters by viciously kicking Gomez on the knee, forcing him out of the game, which Cosmos went on to win.

In the locker room after the game I asked:, "How could you do that?" All I got in reply was: "Well, you saw, he was their best player..."

No doubt Carlos Alberto will be remembered for the joyous goal that sealed Brazil's 4-1 win over Italy in the 1970 World Cup Final. A great memory to be sure. But when Carlos Alberto switched to sweeper, he became so much more, displaying a dazzling array of skills, all used with elegance and total confidence.

While his playing skills were, I'm quite sure, instinctive and immediate, they could not be translated into thoughts, schemes and tactics, and he did not make a good coach. In a 23-year career, he was in charge of 15 clubs, rarely lasting more than one season.

But forget the coaching. It slinks away into nothingness when confronted with the glittering genius of Carlos Alberto in action on the football field.

## "I thought he had a poor 45 seconds"

**Bradford City assistant manager Kenny Black, on substituting keeper Colin Doyle (left) after three minutes against Bury in the EFL Trophy, in which rules state teams must field five "first team" players**

# GOALS we'd like to see again

**To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://po.st/ACY6qO**

**1 TIM CAHILL**
**Melbourne City v Melbourne Victory**
A fantastic first-time strike on the volley from more than 35 yards sails over the goalkeeper and into the top corner of the net.

**2 FRANCO JARA**
**Pachuca v Santos Laguna**
Near-post finish on the volley following a cross by Raul Lopez.

**3 MICHAEL OHANA**
**Hapoel Be'er Sheva v Maccabi Petah Tikva**
Back-heels the ball over his marker before turning and heading the dropping ball over the goalkeeper.

**4 ALEXIS SANCHEZ**
**Arsenal v Ludogorets**
Receives a pass before dribbling into the penalty area, wrong-footing defenders and chipping the keeper.

**5 KEVIN-PRINCE BOATENG**
**Las Palmas v Villarreal**
A fantastic team goal, finished on the volley after an audacious assist by Tana, with a mid-air back-heeled volley.

**6 JONATHAN URRETAVISCAYA**
**Pachuca v Guadalajara**
Runs from his own half, splitting the Guadalajara midfield, before chipping the goalkeeper from inside the penalty area.

# WINNERS

**PARAGUAY**
Won a World Cup qualifying tie away to Argentina for the first time after 51 years of trying.

**MAMELODI SUNDOWNS**
Became the first South African club to qualify for the Club World Cup when they beat Zamalek to win the CAF Champions League.

**GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE**
The defending champions claimed their sixth Chinese Super League title in a row.

# LOSERS

**CHINA**
Defeat at home to Syria left them with one point from four games and little chance of reaching the World Cup finals.

**PALERMO**
Their 1,000th game in Serie A marked their worst run of home form in the top flight as they lost for a fourth game in a row, 4-1 to Torino.

**JOSE MOURINHO**
Humiliated on his return to Stamford Bridge as new side Manchester United were thrashed 4-0 by Chelsea.

"Those who defend must defend. Those with skill must show it"

**Sipho Moeti, a midfielder with South African side Baroka, after receiving a yellow card for showboating**

FIFA

# Makudi joins the banned list

Worawi Makudi, the former president of the Thai FA, has been fined by FIFA and banned from all football-related activities for five years for election fraud.

Makudi was found guilty of forgery and falsification of documents relating to his bid for re-election as president of the Thailand federation.

Makudi was one of the 22 FIFA executive members who voted, in 2010, on who should host the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

A majority of the 22 have now been implicated in allegations of corruption and bribery, with a number having been indicted in an FBI investigation.

**Disgraced... Worawi Makudi**

## The FIFA ExCo members who took the 2018 and 2022 World Cup decisions: what happened next?

### BANNED BY FIFA

**Worawi Makudi** (Thailand)
Electoral fraud in Thai FA election.
**Michel Platini** (France)
Eight-year ban, reduced to four on appeal. Allegedly received unexplained £1.3m payment from Sepp Blatter.
**Sepp Blatter** (Switzerland)
Eight-year ban, reduced to six on appeal. Facing Swiss criminal proceedings over a payment to Platini and the sale of World Cup TV rights to Warner.
**Jack Warner** (Trinidad & Tobago)
Life ban. Indicted by US authorities on corruption charges and fighting extradition to the USA.
**Mohamed Bin Hammam** (Qatar)
Life ban. Accused of bribing Caribbean officials and corruption within the AFC.
**Chuck Blazer** (USA)
Life ban after turning supergrass to give evidence to the FBI about corruption and World Cup vote bribes.
**Chung Mong-joon** (South Korea)
Six-year ban for his role in Korea's 2022 World Cup bid.

### RESIGNED FROM FIFA/ INDICTED BY FBI

**Ricardo Teixeira** (Brazil)
Resigned after being accused of receiving ISL bribes. Wanted by the FBI.
**Nicolas Leoz** (Paraguay)
Accused of receiving ISL bribes. Under house arrest in Paraguay.
**Rafael Salguero** (Guatemala)
Indicted by the FBI in connection with sports marketing kickbacks.

### FINED/REPRIMANDED

**Angel Maria Villar Llona** (Spain)
Fined and warned over lack of co-operation with the investigation into 2018/2022 bidding process.
**Franz Beckenbauer** (Germany)
Reprimanded for non co-operation with 2018/2022 votes inquiry; under investigation concerning the German 2006 World Cup cash scandal.

### DEAD

**Julio Grondona** (Argentina)
Died in 2014 and since revealed to have authorised a $10m payment on behalf of South Africa to Jack Warner.

### RETIRED/STEPPED DOWN

**Jacques Anouma** (Ivory Coast)
Denied allegations that he received $1.5m to vote for Qatar.
**Geoff Thompson** (England)

**Reprimand...Hayatou**

**Quiet...Beckenbauer**

**Denial...Anouma**

**Junji Ogara** (Japan)

### NOW ON FIFA COUNCIL (successor to ExCo)

**Issa Hayatou** (Cameroon)
Reprimanded by the IOC over payments from FIFA's former marketing partners ISL.
**Marios Lefkaritis** (Cyprus)
His family allegedly received £27m in a property deal with the Qatar Investment Authority. Lefkaritis strongly denied his vote was influenced.
**Hany Abo Rida** (Egypt)
Accompanied close ally Bin Hammam on the infamous visit to Trinidad which saw the Qatari accused of bribery.
**Vitaly Mutko** (Russia)
Described by the World Anti-Doping Agency as being "complicit" in his country's doping scandal.
**Michel D'Hooghe** (Belgium)
**Senes Erzik** (Turkey)

### AND NOT FORGETTING...

**Reynald Temarii** (Tahiti) & **Amos Adamu** (Nigeria)
Did not take part in the 2018/2022 vote as they had been suspended after being caught in a newspaper sting, asking for cash in return for their votes.

# Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

## Infantino's 48-team gamble

For all the UEFA-like fingerprints across the roadmap FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future, Gianni Infantino has taken a leaf out of the book of Brazil's Joao Havelange, who wrested power away from Europe in 1974 when he ousted Stanley Rous as president of the world federation.

Havelange had attracted votes by offering disgruntled Africans more seats at the World Cup table. Infantino followed precisely the same path when the defenestration of his UEFA boss, Michel Platini, cast him into the campaigning spotlight ahead of February's election.

For all the opprobrium which has rained down on Infantino over a rocky first six months in the hot seat, he cannot be accused of breaking manifesto pledges. He promised a major increase in development cash and FIFA 2.0 offers a quadrupling; he also held out a happy vision of an expanded World Cup and this, too, is on the table in front of the newly expanded FIFA Council.

> Infantino says the mood is positive for an expanded World Cup

Under Havelange, the old FIFA executive committee followed its leader and enlarged the World Cup finals from 16 teams to 24 then 32 in 1998, the year Havelange handed over to Sepp Blatter. The latter fiddled around the fringes with play-offs and half-slots but never needed to pursue votes that way. Thus the game is locked into 32 for both 2018 in Russia and almost certainly 2022 in Qatar.

Infantino's willingness to embrace expansion was only aping events during his tenure as UEFA general secretary and the ballooning of the European Championship finals from 16 teams to 24 this past summer in France.

The pros and cons were expounded after Portugal's stultifying extra-time defeat of hosts France in the Final.

**Hopes for 2026... Canada hosted the 2015 Women's World Cup Final**

**Memorable...Wales (in red) at this summer's Euro finals in France**

Interest in the qualifying competition had increased while the quality of football in the finals had deteriorated. The number of memorable matches was minimal; Euro 2016 will be remembered only for the Welsh and Icelandic surprises, the giantkillings rather than the giants.

Infantino, defending an engorged World Cup, saw the enlargement of the Euros as a success and evinced the failures of Italy and England at the 2014 World Cup as evidence of rising standards across the world. An alternative would be to view England and Italy (and Russia) as having betrayed their own potential.

The basic dispute is whether the World Cup finals should represent an inspirational pinnacle of the game or a cash cow for as many countries as possible for as long as possible.

This latter fuels the prospect of a 48-team finals featuring an opening play-off round between 16 teams, with eight progressing. Infantino believes that, in an age when teams span the oceans for single friendlies, this is a perfectly tenable concept.

An alternative view was offered recently by Prince Ali, president of the Jordan FA, who considers an inter-continental qualifying competition more meritorious than an increase in the number of finalists. Going intercontinental would also resolve squabbles over allocation of slots.

"If all the teams at the finals turn out to be European," said Prince Ali, "then so be it – and they've earned the right to be there."

A decision on numbers will be taken by FIFA Council in January and recommended to Congress in May – which is now in Bahrain, after Kuala Lumpur said it would not welcome Israeli FA delegates.

Infantino said the mood around the FIFA Council table was positive for an expanded World Cup. Presumably it would have been even more positive if the Asian confederation had sent a full quota of representatives but it made a silly, self-defeating mess of its own elections and must replay in the spring.

Allied to the idea of expansion is the likelihood that the 2026 finals will be awarded, without too much of a struggle, to a triumvirate of the United States, Mexico and Canada now that cohosting is back in favour.

For three large nations to play host demands plenty of matches to scatter around and a 40- or 48-team World Cup would do just that.

From another angle, expansion would also be waving the white flag for national team football as the elite clubs take over the game. Which is like saying that the World Cup can no longer compete in terms of quality so everyone might as well make as much money out of it for as long as possible.

For Infantino, co-hosting would avoid "white elephant" stadia, such as Manaus and Brasilia, and the infrastructural load would be shared. It also reopens the prospect of South American nations hosting the 2030 finals in a centenary gesture to the original finals in Uruguay.

Not that this would please the Chinese, with Wanda already on board as a sponsor and Alibaba rumoured to be next in line. Rotation is back for only the 2026 finals and even there FIFA has signalled that it would not rule out accepting a European bid.

**WC FINALISTS**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1930 | Uruguay, 13 teams |
| 1934 | Italy, 16 teams |
| 1938 | France, 16 teams |
| 1950 | Brazil, 16 teams |
| 1954 | Switzerland, 16 teams |
| 1958 | Sweden, 16 teams |
| 1962 | Chile, 16 teams |
| 1966 | England, 16 teams |
| 1970 | Mexico, 16 teams |
| 1974 | West Germany, 16 teams |
| 1978 | Argentina, 16 teams |
| 1982 | Spain, 24 teams |
| 1986 | Mexico, 24 teams |
| 1990 | Italy, 24 teams |
| 1994 | USA, 24 teams |
| 1998 | France, 32 teams |
| 2002 | S Korea/Japan, 32 teams |
| 2006 | Germany, 32 teams |
| 2010 | South Africa, 32 teams |
| 2014 | Brazil, 32 teams |

## Kari Seitz: note the name

One day women will be refereeing at the World Cup finals. Not the Women's World Cup, but the men's version. Beyond belief even in diversity-happy "new FIFA"? Not when you consider the latest of the world federation's many new faces.

Fatma Samoura is secretary-general, Norwegian Kjetel Siem strategic adviser, Zvonimir Boban football division, Marco Van Basten technical development, England's Joyce Cook member associations officer, New Zealander Sarai Bareman as chief women's football officer and Fabrice Jouhaud on communications.

More intriguing than most, is America's Kari Seitz as senior manager, refereeing. Note, not "women's refereeing", just "refereeing".

**Record holder...referee Kari Seitz**

Seitz holds a record for officiating at four World Cups and three Olympics, and hers is an imaginative appointment which she will find a challenge. But if she maintains the ambition which has brought her this far, then refereeing – with video assistance on the way – is in for an intriguing journey.

Seitz does not rule out women refereeing at the World Cup, although she acknowledges that parts of the planet are not yet ready for the cultural challenge. Definitely not Russia in 2018; certainly not Qatar in 2022.

But what about 2026, especially if that means the United States? In 10 years' time remember; you heard it here first.

# ESM XI

## EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

SEPTEMBER 2016

### HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

### SEASON RANKINGS

Cumulative votes through the season

**GOALKEEPERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid) | 7 |
| Diego ALVES (Valencia) | 1 |
| Willy CABALLERO (Manchester City) | 1 |
| David DE GEA (Manchester United) | 1 |
| Brad JONES (Feyenoord) | 1 |
| Manuel NEUER (Bayern Munich) | 1 |
| Javi VARAS (Las Palmas) | 1 |

**DEFENDERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Diego GODIN (Atletico Madrid) | 5 |
| Filipe LUIS (Atletico Madrid) | 5 |
| Sergi ROBERTO (Barcelona) | 5 |
| Stefan SAVIC (Atletico Madrid) | 5 |
| Raphael GUERRERO (Borussia Dortmund) | 4 |
| Dani ALVES (Juventus) | 3 |
| Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona) | 3 |
| Kamil GLIK (Monaco) | 2 |
| Nicolas OTAMENDI (Manchester City) | 2 |
| Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Bor Dortmund) | 2 |
| David ALABA (Bayern Munich) | 1 |
| Raul ALBIOL (Napoli) | 1 |
| Toby ALDERWEIRELD (Tottenham Hotsopur) | 1 |
| Giorgio CHIELLINI (Juventus) | 1 |
| DANILO (Real Madrid) | 1 |
| Stefan DE VRIJ (Lazio) | 1 |
| Mats HUMMELS (Bayern Munich) | 1 |
| Branislav IVANOVIC (Chelsea) | 1 |
| Laurent KOSCIELNY (Arsenal) | 1 |
| Shkodran MUSTAFI (Arsenal) | 1 |
| PEPE (Real Madrid) | 1 |
| Sergio RAMOS (Real Madrid) | 1 |
| Marcel SCHMELZER (Borussia Dortmund) | 1 |
| Djibril SIDIBE (Monaco) | 1 |

**MIDFIELDERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City) | 8 |
| SON Heung-min (Tottenham Hotspur) | 5 |
| Joshua KIMMICH (Bayern Munich) | 4 |
| THIAGO Alcantara (Bayern Munich) | 3 |
| ARDA Turan (Barcelona) | 2 |
| Marek HAMSIK (Napoli) | 2 |
| KOKE (Atletico Madrid) | 2 |
| Dele ALLI (Tottenham Hotspur) | 1 |
| Tiemoue BAKAYOKO (Monaco) | 1 |
| Sergio BUSQUETS (Barcelona) | 1 |
| Philippe COUTINHO (Liverpool) | 1 |
| Karim EL AHMADI (Feyenoord) | 1 |
| FERNANDINHO (Manchester City) | 1 |
| Toni KROOS (Real Madrid) | 1 |
| Gelson MARTINS (Sporting) | 1 |
| Luka MODRIC (Real Madrid) | 1 |
| Miralem PJANIC (Juventus) | 1 |
| Ivan RAKITIC (Barcelona) | 1 |
| Franck RIBERY (Bayern Munich) | 1 |
| Tonny VILHENA (Feyenoord) | 1 |

**FORWARDS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Antoine GRIEZMANN (Atletico Madrid) | 5 |
| Arkadiusz MILIK (Napoli) | 5 |
| Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City) | 4 |
| Edinson CAVANI (Paris Saint-Germain) | 3 |
| Gonzalo HIGUAIN (Juventus) | 3 |
| Ousmane DEMBELE (Borussia Dortmund) | 2 |
| Mauro ICARDI (Internazionale) | 2 |
| Luis SUAREZ (Barcelona) | 2 |
| Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (Borussia Dortmund) | 1 |
| Jose CALLEJON (Napoli) | 1 |
| Diego COSTA (Chelsea) | 1 |
| Javier HERNANDEZ (Bayer Leverkusen) | 1 |
| Anthony MODESTE (Cologne) | 1 |
| Alexis SANCHEZ (Arsenal) | 1 |
| Raheem STERLING (Manchester City) | 1 |
| Theo WALCOTT (Arsenal) | 1 |

**ESM – EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA**

**The members of ESM are:** *A Bola* (Portugal), *Elf* (Holland), *Fanatik* (Turkey), *Frankfurter Allegmeine Zeitung* (Germany), *Goal News* (Greece), *Kicker* (Germany), *Marca* (Spain), *Nemzeti Sport* (Hungary), *So Foot* (France), *Sport* (Belgium), *Sport Express* (Russia), *De Telegraaf* (Holland), *TIPSbladet* (Denmark), *World Soccer* (England).
More details of votes at **worldsoccer.com/esm11**

"I didn't believe there were people this good. After so many blows, I'd lost hope"

**Ruben, a homeless man who slept outside Real Socieded's stadium, tells a Spanish TV programme how the club gave him a job**

## Headliner

# Gabriel Jesus

### Young striker in the spotlight for Brazil

Plenty of eyebrows were raised when new Brazil coach Tite made a point of recalling midfielder Paulinho to the national team. But perhaps his choice of 19-year-old Gabriel Jesus of Palmeiras at centre-forward was just as surprising and certainly even braver.

True, the youngster had just helped Brazil to finally win that elusive Olympic gold medal, but there is a huge difference between playing in an Olympic tournament and making your mark in the World Cup qualifying campaign – especially in a Brazil side that is floundering in sixth place.

Moreover, his contribution to the gold-medal side came on the left wing, from where he would cut in onto his stronger right foot. He had started the Rio Games at centre-forward but he had been one of the least effective members in a misfiring team that were held to goalless draws in their opening two games.

So could the teenager really make a difference at centre-forward for the senior side?

He made his debut at the start of September against Ecuador, and for the first 70 minutes even coach Tite must have had his doubts as the rookie snatched wildly at a couple of opportunities. He was also caught offside several times – a criticism the striker confessed was pointed out to him by his mother after the game.

However, Jesus ended up tipping the balance in the final 20 minutes. First, having managed to stay onside, he burst beyond the defence and was brought down by the keeper to win a penalty, from which Neymar scored the opener. Then he struck twice himself in the last few minutes, flicking home a cross played in from the left and scoring with a wonderful shot on the turn from just outside the area.

Although he struggled to make an impression against a tight Colombian defence in Brazil's 2-1 win five days later, that was perhaps understandable for a raw talent that is still developing both technically and emotionally.

It has been pointed out that he does pick up a lot of yellow cards at club level and his head can drop when things do not go his way – which has not yet been seen with the national team, but was certainly apparent during his slow start to the Olympic tournament.

There are, though, many promising signs. His pace forces opposing defences to sit deep, which in turn opens up space for Renato Augusto to organise Brazil's passing, and he also seems to have developed an interesting on-field rapport with Neymar.

And October's qualifying games were to bring more goals. Scoring the fourth goal in a 5-0 win at home to Bolivia, he rounded off a nice combination with Neymar with a well-judged finish from a narrow angle with his left foot. The goal against Venezuela was more important since it opened the scoring and set Brazil on the path to a comfortable 2-0 victory at a venue where the previous month Argentina had needed to dig deep to rescue a 2-2 draw. The manner of the goal was also very pleasing, as he ran hard to press and intercept a kick from keeper Dani Hernandez, who he then lobbed into the unguarded net.

With four goals in four senior internationals, Jesus has underlined why the Manchester City-bound youngster is not out of his depth wearing the Brazil number nine shirt.

*Tim Vickery*

**Danger...Gabriel Jesus spreads panic as he runs at Bolivia defender Edward Zenteno during Brazil's 5-0 World Cup qualifying victory in October**

"Sousa doesn't excite us. His press conferences are insignificant. They make you want to fall asleep"

**Ex-Fiorentina striker Francesco Graziani (left) takes aim at current *Viola* coach, Paulo Sousa, for his safety-first tactics**

# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

## Appointments, sackings and loans

## IN

**Trailblazer...former USA national coach Bob Bradley**

### EUROPE

Former Italy boss **CESARE PRANDELLI**, whose last job was with Galatasaray in Turkey, took charge of Valencia, becoming the Spanish club's eighth coach in just over four years.

**LUCAS ALCARAZ** was appointed coach of La Liga side Granada for the third time.

**LUIGI DELNERI** replaced Giuseppe Iachini as Udinese boss after just seven Serie A games.

Ex USA coach **BOB BRADLEY** left French second-tier side Le Havre and replaced Francesco Guidolin at Swansea City, becoming the Premier League's first American manager.

**MIKE PHELAN** was named boss of Premier League side Hull City. He replaces **STEVE BRUCE**, who took over from Roberto Di Matteo at Aston Villa, while their Championship rivals Derby County reappointed former England manager **STEVE McCLAREN** just 17 months after sacking him.

**Hands on... Cesare Prandelli**

Werder Bremen named **ALEXANDER NOURI** as coach in place of Viktor Skripnik.

**ARTUR PETROSYAN** replaced Varuzhan Sukiasyan as coach of Armenia after they lost their first three World Cup qualifiers.

**JOSE MORAIS**, a former assistant to Jose Mourinho, replaced Temuri Ketsbaia as coach of AEK Athens.

**Home...French coach Rudi Garcia has taken charge at OM following the arrival of a new owner**

### Garcia in at Marseille

Former Roma boss **RUDI GARCIA** agreed a three-year deal to return to his homeland and take over as coach of Marseille.

The Frenchman's appointment was announced three days after American businessman Frank McCourt completed his takeover of the Ligue 1 side, with Garcia replacing interim coach Franck Passi.

**ANDONI ZUBIZARRETA** also joined the club as sporting director – a post he held at Barcelona until last year.

## OUT

### EUROPE

Spain's **GERARD PIQUE** says he will retire from international football after the 2018 World Cup as he is growing "tired" of criticism. The defender has been a contentious figure due to his public backing of Catalan independence, as well as his part in perceived past squabbling between Barcelona players and their Real Madrid counterparts.

Barcelona defender **JEREMY MATHIEU** quit international football at 32, citing a "lack of motivation" to continue playing for France.

Wolfsburg parted company with coach **DIETER HECKING** after six games without a win.

**SYLVAIN RIPOLL** was sacked by Lorient with the club bottom of Ligue 1.

Former Italy goalkeeper **WALTER ZENGA** was dismissed by Wolverhampton Wanderers after just 87 days as manager of the Championship side.

**Stress..Ljupko Petrovic says he left because of a bad atmosphere**

### Petrovic quits Levski

**LJUPKO PETROVIC** quit as coach of unbeaten Bulgarian league leaders Levski Sofia an hour before a game against Beroe Stara Zagora, claiming he was "working under too much stress, in a bad atmosphere".

Petrovic, who was coach of Red Star Belgrade when they won the 1991 European Cup, only took charge of Levski in the summer.

### AFRICA

After just two games in charge, **MILOVAN RAJEVAC** resigned as coach of Algeria following a 1-1 draw at home to Cameroon.

Libya fired Spanish coach **JAVIER CLEMENTE** following a 4-0 loss to DR Congo in the World Cup

**Losing run... Dieter Hecking**

PRO:DIRECT
SOCCER

# COLOUR YOUR GAME

SEE THE FULL UMBRO COLLECTION ONLINE

www.prodirectsoccer.com

# Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

## Pep and Jose: the managerial giants are exposed

Emperors with no clothes. In swift succession, both those giants among managers, Jose Mourinho and Pep Guardiola, were seriously exposed.

In Guardiola's case, we might have known it was coming after his Manchester City team had been held to an embarrassing 3-3 draw by as modest a team as Celtic, who were subsequently beaten 2-0 at home by Borussia Monchengladbach. But in Barcelona, where he once reigned so majestically, Guardiola blundered astonishingly.

In Turin, Joe Hart must have been laughing his head off. Brusquely exiled by Guardiola, who wanted a goalkeeper more accomplished with his distribution, he enlisted Claudio Bravo, whose dismal error against Barcelona, clumsily handling outside the box, led to his expulsion. By sharp contrast, Hart, however uneasy in France last summer, had a superb game for England in Slovenia, enabling an otherwise stuttering team to avoid defeat.

Then there was the matter of Sergio Aguero. Whatever possessed Guardiola to leave him on the bench? A goalscorer of such great renown, his exclusion suggested that the best Guardiola was hoping for was a draw. Well, he did not remotely get it.

City's bright Belgian international, Kevin De Bruyne, wastefully deployed at Camp Nou too far behind the limited attack, has expressed his confidence in Guardiola. But an unconvincing draw at home to Southampton, profiting from another of those costly errors by the expensive John Stones, suggests that City's position on top of the Premier League may be a shaky one.

De Bruyne, of course, was jettisoned by Mourinho at Chelsea, only to return to the continent, excel with Wolfsburg and come back to England as one of the outstanding European attackers of the moment. At Chelsea, where he once excelled then declined, Mourinho saw his Manchester United team thrashed and outplayed by Chelsea. United's defence was wretchedly awry – can Chris Smalling really be an England centre-back now? – as opposed to a Chelsea team now gainfully employing Antonio Conte's Juventus-style three men at the back.

Mourinho's petulant complaint at the end of the game over Conte turning in triumph to Chelsea's joyful supporters merely emphasised his disarray.

Yet Chelsea themselves had so recently been crushed 3-0 by an Arsenal side which had failed to score against them, let alone beat them, for years. Form, it seems, has gone out of the window.

**Error...Claudio Bravo is about to be sent off after handling outside his area**

**Not so special...Jose Mourinho (left) and Pep Guardiola**

## Infantino and Ceferin sink to new lows

At FIFA and UEFA, things are as usual going awry. FIFA president Gianni Infantino wants the World Cup finals to be enlarged to 40 or 48 countries. Even the ghastly Joao Havelange and Sepp Blatter never went as far as that.

Over at UEFA, the highly unconvincing new president, Aleksander Ceferin, has denied Norwegian charges of corruption and distinguished himself by exulting in the fact that, thanks to the negligence of his predecessor Michel Platini, the ensuing European finals will be played not in one country but all over the Continent.

Manager in waiting... Gareth Southgate

## Southgate will have to suffice

Now that Steve Bruce has joined Aston Villa, having twice been passed over by the FA selection committee, Gareth Southgate might as well stay as England manager, though he doesn't inspire me.

Sam Allardyce was unwisely preferred to Bruce when appointed, and time was allowed to run out on Bruce after Allardyce had departed – with a million pound pay-off which still hasn't been adequately explained.

The word is that Southgate's permanent appointment depends on the result of the coming match against Scotland, a team presently in such abysmal form that nothing but a substantial victory would surely be acceptable. However, it is hard to see any other English contestant in sight.

Eddie Howe is surely an England manager of the future, though he himself has said that it is now too early. He has worked wonders at Bournemouth, but it was strange to hear the gushing endorsement of Howe by the recently appointed FA chairman Greg Clarke.

When a twittering member of yet another MPs committee sitting in judgement on football praised the prospect of Howe's appointment, Clarke came over all effusive. "When you look at people like Eddie Howe," he gushed. "The question is not wouldn't he be a really good bloke, because he is. The question is, at what point do you throw him into the furnace? Is it now, is it in five years, is it in ten years?

"Do we give him enough time to acquire skills so he has a pretty good chance of success, or do we throw him in early?"

What must Gareth Southgate think about that? Howe is clearly mature enough to take it in his stride.

## FA Cup deserves better than Glenn

Martin Glenn, an FA chairman with no known background in major football, now wants FA Cup replays to be discontinued, with market research – those dreaded words – having supported his view.

Smaller clubs would be grievously financially wounded should this happen.

What should be surely forgotten is the League Cup. In the last round, club after club put out what amounted to reserve teams. It is a tournament which doesn't deserve to survive.

## Jack deserves another chance

On the same Saturday that Arsenal were firing blanks against Middlesbrough, down at Bournemouth Jack Wilshere was showing in his first 90-minute game for two years what an inspiration he can be.

Let it not be forgotten that when England played in Slovenia a couple of seasons ago, it was Wilshere who saved the day with two splendidly taken goals. He is now on loan at Bournemouth, where he is starting to show the multiple skills which make him, in form, the best of his English kind.

It baffled me that, in his newspaper column, Jamie Redknapp should write that Wilshere would be best advised not to return after his loan to Arsenal, where he would find it difficult to get a place. Yet how badly they could have used him against Middlesbrough.

I sincerely hope Wilshere is recalled to the England squad and indeed the team for the forthcoming Wembley matches.

Loan...Jack Wilshere at Bournemouth

Martin Glenn, FA chairman, now wants FA Cup replays to be discontinued

## Referee Webb's indiscretions

Howard Webb, alas, has published an autobiography. He will always surely be remembered as the referee of the World Cup Final in which, early on, he failed to send off a Dutch delinquent for a brutal foul. True, it would have taken a referee of iron courage to have done such a thing, but the law is the law and there is no doubt at all that Webb did not uphold it.

Though it can only be speculation, I believe that two other English referees who controlled a World Cup Final game would have shown a red card.

In 1950, George Reader, a Southampton headmaster, showed amazing courage in front of a 200,000 crowd in Rio, where Brazil lost 2-1 to Uruguay in a match they seemed almost sure to win. Not for a moment was Reader intimidated.

Years afterwards, in 1974 in Munich, Jack Taylor, a Wolverhampton butcher, had no such pressure to resist, but he was never known to lack authority and courage.

Wrong...Howard Webb fails to send off Nigel De Jong (right)

Webb's autobiography indulged in a sordid anecdote which has led to denials by those implicated. In a referees' meeting in Cumbria, he alleges that Graham Poll and Mark Halsey came to blows and had to be separated by Uriah Rennie, a fracas which both referees deny.

Webb also writes engagingly of an "absolutely rat-arsed drinking session" after which, at 4am, they rang the BBC commentator Alan Green, with Webb adopting a supposed Northern Ireland accent.

● Read Brian Glanville's exclusive online column at worldsoccer.com

eye witness

Howard Johnson reports

FRANCE

# Nice hit the ground running

## Early leaders boosted by Favre's astute signings

Lucien Favre may not have been the name on everyone's lips in the corridors of Europe's footballing elite this summer, but right now the 59-year-old Swiss national is making big waves in France.

Having arrived on the south coast as coach of Nice as recently as May, it would have been reasonable to assume that the former boss of Borussia Monchengladbach would have a tricky bedding-in period as the club was in a state of flux.

Claude Puel, in charge since 2012, had led the team to an impressive fourth-place finish in the 2015-16 season before leaving "by mutual consent" at the end of his contract. Meanwhile, the team's two most important players, midfielder Nampalys Mendy and striker Hatem Ben Arfa, had also departed, for Leicester City and Paris Saint-Germain respectively.

Such major upheavals usually lead to a period of acclimatisation and adaptation. But Favre has hit the ground running. After 10 games of the Ligue 1 campaign, Nice were sitting pretty at the top of the table, with an impressive 26 points in the bag,

**Astute...Nice coach Lucien Favre**

**Shock...applauding fans after the Monaco game**

six ahead of Unai Emery's moneybags PSG. What's more, Nice were the only side not to have tasted defeat at that stage, while also conceding the joint-fewest goals. Things didn't go so well in the Europa League – where they lost to Schalke of Germany and Russia's Krasnodar, with the latter putting five past Favre's side – but all the same, there are plenty of reasons to be cheerful.

In the eyes of the European football press, however, the club's dynamic start has been overshadowed by one single event: the arrival of Mario Balotelli.

The 26-year-old Italian is drinking in the last-chance saloon after making a mess of things at his two previous clubs, Milan and Liverpool. But signed on a one-year deal, "Super Mario" started impressively, with two debut goals in a 3-2 win against Nice's local rivals Marseille and a brilliant 86th-minute winner in a 2-1 victory over Lorient. True, he did subsequently get a red card in that game, but his dismissal was for two yellows, the first of which was for overcelebrating. The card was subsequently rescinded, so perhaps he should be given the benefit of the doubt on this occasion.

While Favre knows it will take all of his considerable managerial skill to keep the

**On fire...Mario Balotelli (left) celebrates with Jean Seri**

undoubtedly talented Balotelli on the straight and narrow, Marseille's Bafetimbi Gomis, himself on loan from Swansea City, is convinced the Italian is in the right place to get his career back on track.

"Mario's a friend who, like me, has been through some difficult times in England," says Gomis. "He's an important player for Ligue 1 because he'll up the profile of a championship that's often been put down. I think top players like him, guys who've had problems in big European leagues, can get back on track in our league, and that's got to be good for its profile."

As for Favre, he says: "We've got a lot of work to do with Mario. He has to

Impressive...(left to right) Paul Baysse, Dante and Mario Balotelli

understand that he needs to work hard on the field. Everything's faster these days – trains, planes, the Internet. Football as well. Mario has to work."

But despite what some may think, Nice have been far from a one-man team. The coach brought in Brazilian defender Dante from Wolfsburg, having worked with him at Gladbach, as well as midfielder Wylan Cyprien from Lens, who at 21 looks like an astute signing.

Favre has also been able to get the best out of some of last season's stalwarts, such as skipper Paul Baysse and Portuguese utility player Ricardo. Yet Favre has also stayed true to his philosophy of giving youth a chance, a policy that's paid off handsomely in the case of Malang Sarr, a 17-year-old defender who's impressed with his maturity and composure.

The most remarkable result of Nice's campaign so far was the 4-0 demolition of Monaco – in fine form themselves this season – in September. But Favre knows there's much work still to be done. After the 1-0 Europa defeat against Schalke he admitted: "Everything needs attention. We lost too many balls, we didn't have any rhythm and we have to see how the game's unfolding more quickly."

> "We've got a lot of work to do with Mario. He has to understand that he needs to work hard on the field"
>
> **Nice coach Lucien Favre**

It's early days yet, of course, with many matches still to be played, but over the course of four-and-a-half years Favre turned Borussia Monchengladbach from relegation certainties into a Champions League outfit. His desire to play fluid, dynamic, attack-minded football, while always ensuring defensive rigour at the back, made him a fan's favourite in Germany and he was voted coach of the year three times.

The coach himself says he opted for Nice after he became "tired of waiting for Everton to make a decision" about him and he has already brought more rigour to the club, with two-and-a-half hour training sessions not unheard of.

As local football journalist William Humberset points out: "Nice has traditionally been a team of fighters. Claude Puel turned them into a football team and Favre is cut from the same cloth.

"He's got the same philosophy, but I reckon he's better." WS

Mark Gleeson reports

SOUTH AFRICA

# Sundowns count their blessings

## South Africans win the continental crown after huge slice of luck

Mamelodi Sundowns might be considered the most fortuitous club to win the African Champions League, but the quality of their play in grabbing the opportunity to become continental champions clearly put them a cut above the rest of the field in this year's competition.

The South African side, arguably the richest on the continent, are only the second from the country to win the top club prize in African football, and they did so because of the most enormous dollop of good fortune.

But whether the contribution of Idrissa Traore was remembered among the ferocious celebrations is doubtful.

He is the Malian player who moved from Stade Malien to DR Congo outfit AS Vita Club with a suspension hanging over him from his participation with his old team in the 2015 African Confederation Cup – and was therefore not supposed to play when Vita fielded him in their opening game of this year's Champions League.

By the time the error was uncovered, Vita had come through three preliminary rounds to book a place in the eight-team league stage. The last club they eliminated en route was Sundowns, who they edged out on the away goals rule in the third round.

So when Vita were disqualified, Sundowns took their place and, having been handed a huge turn of fortune, they certainly needed no prompting. They began their group phase by winning 2-0 away to the 2014 winners, Entente Setif of Algeria, in a match that was stopped seconds from the finish due to rioting by angry home fans. Setif were consequently kicked out of the tournament and the points declared null and void.

Sundowns beat Enyimba of Nigeria after that and then Zamalek of Egypt both home and away to make sure they won the group with a game to spare and had secured home advantage in the second leg of their semi-final tie against Zesco United of Zambia.

Sundowns prepared thoroughly for their group games, studying their opponents effectively, planning their journeys with military precision and generally bringing a new level of professionalism to the African club game. Coach Pitso Mosimane, whose spell as national coach of South Africa had ended in embarrassment three years ago, more than redeemed his reputation with his enthusiastic approach to a competition that South African clubs have traditionally seen as more of a burden than a prize.

It almost threatened to unravel in the semi-final when Sundowns let in two quick goals midway through the second half of the first leg in Ndola, before Khama Billiat's late strike meant they were just 2-1 down with the home game to come. They won that 2-0 to reach the Final for the first time since their only previous appearance in 2001.

> "We were the Denmark of the Champions League"
> **Mamelodi Sundowns coach Pitso Mosimane**

Zamalek were familiar foes in the decider. "We know each other so well, I can predict their line-up in my sleep," said Mosimane before the first leg of the Final, where an early goal from Anthony Laffor put Sundowns on their way to a convincing 3-0 victory. And it could have been an even bigger score as the baking sun and altitude left Zamalek gasping for air, with Sundowns in complete control.

Despite the fact that only once in more than 50 years of competition had a club come back from a three-goal deficit in a Champions League Final, Zamalek took the game to Sundowns in the second leg in Alexandria, where Egypt's draconian

Champions... Mamelodi Sundowns

Hope...flares greet Zamalek's goal in the second leg of the Final, at the Borg El Arab Stadium

regulations on crowds saw the government announce a limit of 20,000 spectators. Nevertheless 70,000 turned up at the imposing Borg El Arab Stadium to ensure a rollicking atmosphere.

Sundowns' sturdy defence foiled relentless attacks and the threat of a counter-attack goal was always on the cards until Stanley Ohawuchi finally scored for the Egyptians after 62 minutes. That signalled a siege of the Sundowns goal but time ran out for Zamalek and a disappointed crowd swiftly emptied the stadium, leaving the South Africans to celebrate with a small crowd of some 200 of their supporters.

Sundowns' success comes 21 years after Orlando Pirates won a first title for South Africa, in 1995. While there is a general apathy among South African clubs about the continental club competitions – onerous travel, distraction from domestic targets, cheating referees, poor playing conditions – Sundowns have long cherished a less insular agenda.

For the last 13 years the club have been owned by billionaire mining magnate Patrice Motsepe, who has ploughed millions into the club. He fell under the spell of Johan Cruyff for the first years of his tenure and was persuaded to give the likes of Hristo Stoichkov and Johan Neeskens – great players but both with little coaching pedigree – a job in charge of Sundowns. They both tripped over their egos in vastly underestimating the competitiveness of the South African league and left Motsepe with nothing but a dent in his bank account. Ditto for the former France boss Henri Michel, whose Sundowns career ended in an ignominious escape in a police armoured vehicle as angry fans bayed for his blood after one poor result too many.

Mosimane made clear his Champions League ambitions from the moment he took over from Neeskens and was given a generous budget to buy the best talent in South Africa. Within a season he had delivered a first league title in seven years and Sundowns have now won two of the last three championships.

They were disappointed not to reach the group phase of the Champions League last year, losing in the last preliminary round to eventual winners TP Mazembe. "Best side we played in the competition," said Mazembe coach Patrice Carteron of Sundowns after his team won the title.

Unlucky to lose to Vita on away goals, Sundowns' fortunes changed just weeks later with the surprising announcement from the Confederation of African Football that the Congolese had been expelled and Sundowns were "re-instated".

"We were the Denmark of the Champions League," joked Mosimane. Indeed, few clubs have so readily accepted such a second chance. WS

Strong...Sundowns' Khama Billiat takes control

eyewitness

Skapti Hallgrimsson reports

ICELAND

# Beyond the Euros

Euro 2016 success may have boosted tourism but it's done nothing for domestic league crowds

By far the smallest country ever to play at a finals tournament, the amazing success of Iceland at this summer's Euros had a huge influence on the nation.

Huge TV screens were put up in the capital, Reykjavik, and in Akureyri, the largest city in the north of the country and the home town of national captain Aron Gunnarsson, with an estimated 30,000 fans watching the quarter-final game against France on the capital's big screen.

It is thought that up to 10 per cent of the population attended at least one of Iceland's games in France. Reaching the last 16 was beyond most Icelanders' dreams – and that was before they beat England in Nice to record the biggest victory in the history of Icelandic football.

Beating England was a huge step in footballing terms, and an important moment for the country psychologically after the difficult years that followed the

international banking collapse which hit Iceland harshly.

Yet despite the national team's remarkable summer, attendances at domestic games in the top-flight Urvalsdeild declined considerably this year. In fact, crowds were the second-lowest since the league was expanded from 10 teams to 12 in 2008.

A total of 128,741 people watched the 132 league games this year – an average of just 975 people per game and a drop from last year's figure of 1,107.

The reason for the decline may be that fans, who had simply watched so much quality football this summer, turned their attention elsewhere after the tournament.

As the domestic league is played during the summer, there was an interruption for a whole month this term. Even though not a single player in the squad that went to France plays his club football at home, the Icelandic FA decided that there would be no fixtures – in either the men's or women's leagues – apart from those that were needed to accommodate teams playing in European club competitions.

**Following...fans get set to leave Keflavik Airport for France**

**Passion...supporters in Reykjavik during the Euro finals**

The quality of games in this year's Urvalsdeild was not the same as it has been in recent years. Defending champions FH from Hafnarfjordur were once again the pick of the bunch, winning an eighth title in 13 years, but they failed to live up to their relatively high standards of previous years. KR of Reykjavik, who historically have a big support, started the campaign poorly, and even though that changed after the Euros and they managed to qualify for Europe once more, their fans didn't show up in the same numbers as they usually do.

KR, who finished third, will join runners-up Stjarnan and cup winners Valur, who beat IBV 2-0 in the Final, in the first qualifying round of the 2016-17 Europa League, while FH go into the second round of that season's Champions League qualifiers.

Fylkir and Throttur are relegated from the top flight and will be replaced next year by second-tier champions KA and runners-up Grindavik.

Interestingly, Iceland's performance in France not only boosted national pride – it also boosted international interest in the country as a travel destination. On the day Iceland were knocked out of the tournament by France, searches for flights to Iceland were 656 per cent up on the same day in 2015, according to international website idealo.

And with tourism having surpassed fishing as the nation's biggest industry in recent years, that is good news for the economy and the local community. WS

## EUROPEAN SUMMER LEAGUE ROUND-UPS

There are new champions in Finland and the Faroe Islands as **Mariehamn** and **Vikingur** claimed their maiden league titles.

Mariehamn clinched the Finnish title with a 2-1 victory at home to Ilves to finish three points clear of 27-times champions HJK and a further point clear of last year's winners SJK.

"I still can't believe this is true. I just cried a lot on the pitch," Mariehamn goalkeeper Walter Viitala told Finnish daily *Helsingin Sanomat*. "I made my mother proud today."

**League winner...Jani Lyyski of Mariehamn**

Vikingur were crowned Faroese champions for the first time as a 3-1 win away against AB saw them finish a point clear of KI.

There were no surprises in Belarus, where **BATE** won their 11th successive league title with five games to spare. **Dundalk** made it three championships in a row in the Republic of Ireland, as did **Astana** in the Kazakhstan Premier League.

**Bryan Kay** reports

NICARAGUA

# Gold Cup is Duarte's target

## Qualification would confirm progress in baseball-loving nation

**Tussle...Nicaragua's Erick Tellez (left) clashes with Jorman Aguilar of Panama**

A tentative yet unlikely story of footballing rags being turned into relative riches is beginning to play out in a less-trodden corner of Latin America. Better known as a dominion of baseball, Nicaragua is on the up in international terms after decades as a regional also-ran in Central America.

Located between Honduras and El Salvador to the north and Costa Rica to the south, perhaps the greatest period in the history of the Nicaraguan national team began with the appointment of a coach from a neighbouring country that has often been a bitter political bedfellow in the past.

Costa Rica's Henry Duarte was installed as Nicaragua coach in December 2014 and since then the national side have put together an impressive run of results, including an incredible away victory in a World Cup qualifier against Jamaica in September 2015.

*Los Pinoleros* won 3-2 in Kingston before ultimately succumbing to the Reggae Boyz – who were runners-up in that year's CONCACAF Gold Cup – and losing 4-3 on aggregate. But although this meant another early exit from the World Cup qualifiers, it was also an early road marker in a sustained period of progress.

Since those qualifiers, Nicaragua have registered some notable friendly results, including a draw with Trinidad & Tobago, a 5-0 victory over Cuba and a rare 1-0 victory over Panama. Alongside those positive results, there were also narrow defeats at the hands of Costa Rica and Honduras, the perennial big boys of the region. And, in August, they managed a goalless draw with St Kitts & Nevis, the Caribbean island nation who are on an admirable run of form of their own of late.

> They have qualified just once before. That was in 2009, when they failed to score a single goal in defeats against Mexico, Panama and Guadeloupe

The team's surge under Duarte has seen them climb to a high of 92 in the FIFA world rankings last year, which ranks as an all-time record for the nation.

**Keen...a youth game at the Don Bosco Centre in Managua**

Due to their lowly status, and the configuration of CONCACAF World Cup qualifiers, meaningful matches can be few and far between for the men who wear the blue and white. And a lack of games against quality opposition during the lean

years between World Cup campaigns has often hindered efforts aimed at improving the national game of countries such as Nicaragua.

Duarte aims to remedy this dearth of fixtures against elevated competition by setting up matches with teams that his charges aren't used to facing, with Israel and Canada being mentioned recently in the Nicaraguan press. He also has the Copa Centroamericana, the biennial tournament for the national teams of Central America, coming up in January.

Duarte has identified an overabundance of foreigners playing in Nicaragua's domestic league set-up as an impediment to the progress of local talent. In tandem, few Nicaraguans ply their trade in quality leagues overseas.

Matters haven't been helped in recent months by reports of tension between the Nicaraguan Football Federation president, Jacinto Reyes and members of the federation's executive committee.

Nonetheless, football is growing in popularity. Over the course of last year, the national side has grown hugely in tactical intelligence, according to Duarte, and not just regionally but in a world sense. It can, perhaps, be argued that the presence of better training facilities in recent years has been a big help.

**Top draw...baseball is still the number one sport**

**Strike...team-mates congratulate Luis Fernando Copete after a goal against El Salvador in March**

A strong showing at next year's Copa Centroamericana might yield a place at the CONCACAF Gold Cup later in 2017. There, Nicaragua would get competitive game time against the wider region's best, but it is a competition for which they have qualified just once before. That was in 2009, when they failed to score a single goal in defeats against Mexico, Panama and Guadeloupe.

An appearance in next July's tournament – which is expected to be held in the USA – would serve as an official seal on the progress Nicaragua have made in the two years since Duarte took charge. WS

ITALY

# Icardi fans the flames

## Inter captain upsets his club's Ultras with new book

If there is one thing that has been learned over the years, it is that Internazionale are capable of creating their very own problems. Take the recent row between team captain, Argentinian striker Mauro Icardi, and the club's diehard "Ultra" fans.

The row burst into public view when Inter lost 2-1 at home to Cagliari – a game in which Icardi missed a first-half penalty with the score at 0-0. In reality, though, a bitter disagreement between Icardi and a section of the ultras had begun with the publication of Icardi's autobiography, "*Keep On Trucking – My Secret Story*".

In the book, Icardi chose to recall a clash between himself and Inter ultras which took place after a 3-1 away defeat to Sassuolo in February 2015.

He recalls how, after the game, he had gone over to the Inter fans and offered his shirt to a young Inter fan. At that point, however, an angry Inter ultra stepped in, took the shirt from the child and threw it back in Icardi's face.

The player's account of the incident reveals: "At that moment, I saw red. I wanted to hit the bastard after what he had just done. So I began to insult him, heavy insults. 'Piece of shit. You do the big man and the bully with a child just to show how tough you are to the fans. You should just be ashamed of yourself, you should all be ashamed.' Then I threw the shirt back into his face."

Informed by the Inter management that he had better be ready for problems from fans when he got home that night after the game, Icardi goes on to say he was ready to deal with them "one by one", adding: "Maybe they don't know that I grew up in a crime-ridden Latin American city zone [in Rosario] where you had people killed in the streets. How many of them are there? 50, 100, 200. Well let them know this. I will bring over 100 criminals from Argentina and kill them all on the spot and then we'll see."

Row...Mauro Icardi (left) and Fredy Guarin argue with fans at Sassuolo in 2015

When he next stepped out onto the San Siro pitch, against Cagliari, the player was greeted with a banner that read: "Icardi, you lousy liar, take off the captain's armband."

The Cagliari defeat saw Inter drop to joint 10th in the table and the club's displeasure with Icardi also became immediately clear. Speaking after the game, team director Piero Ausilio told *La Gazzetta dello Sport*: "As far as the things written are concerned, the most stupid thing was to bring up a story from the past and then retell them in a probably inaccurate manner."

Icardi's compatriot, long-time Inter icon Javier Zanetti, who is now a club director, also expressed his disapproval, saying: "The fans are the most important thing and we've all got to respect them. We cannot have this sort of behaviour from a person who works for the club."

Had Zanetti known that the "fans" had another banner waiting for Icardi when he returned home after the match, he might not have been so keen to defend them. Outside Icardi's apartment, the banner read: "We're ready for you, Just tell us when your friends from Argentina arrive. Or will you just run away?"

Doubtless, this storm will pass – and it certainly is not the first incident in the dramatic life and times of Mauro Icardi, who had been best known as the guy who "stole" the wife of Sampdoria team-mate Maxi Lopez.

Icardi had met Lopez's actor wife, Wanda Nara, during his time at Sampdoria, and after more than five years of marriage and the birth of three children, Ms Nara and Lopez divorced in November 2013. Within six months, Icardi and Wanda Nara had married in Argentina. These days, 29-year-old Wanda works as Icardi's agent, while the couple have had a child of their own and she is currently pregnant with her second child by Icardi.

If anyone had any doubt about how Lopez felt, he made it crystal clear after Icardi had moved to Inter by refusing to shake hands with his opponent when the two sides met just five months after he had split up with his wife.

There are those in Argentina who believe that Lionel Messi, who is an old friend of Lopez, "banned" Icardi from the country's World Cup squad over the matter. While Argentina coach Edgardo Bauza denied such speculation, no less a figure than Diego Maradona, in Rome for a charity match, branded Icardi a "traitor".

The life and times of Icardi would seem to remind us that football marches to the sound of its own (moral) drum. WS

> "Let them know this. I will bring over 100 criminals from Argentina and kill them all on the spot"
> **Mauro Icardi threatens Inter's ultras in a passage from his autobiography**

Feud...Sampdoria's Maxi Lopez (in blue) and Icardi

Banner...Inter fans protest against their captain

Skipper...Mauro Icardi

eyewitness

**James Montague** reports

KOSOVO

# New nation, fresh problems

## In their first World Cup qualifying campaign, Europe's newest nation face unique difficulties

For a brief few moments, everything – apart from the dozens of flares that littered the pitch, that is – had disappeared from view. Gone were the two white minarets that usually overlook the Gjilan City Stadium in eastern Kosovo. Gone too were the lines of riot police patrolling the front of the main stand along with the 10,000 strong crowd, all enveloped in a monstrous blue cloud of smoke. On the other side of the pitch, a similar scene was being played out, but the consuming cloud was red. The only evidence of a football match being played was the thunderous noise of drums and chants rising ethereally from the fog.

It was the fifth time the referee had called a halt to the biggest match in the Kosovo Superliga, the city derby between the red of KF Gjilani and the blue of KF Drita. For the past 20 years the match had attracted tens of thousands of partisan fans, even as Kosovo remained in political and sporting limbo following its war of independence from what is now Serbia between 1997 and 1998. The war killed thousands and left Kosovo as a self-declared republic, although officially unrecognised by the UN.

But today's Gjilan derby has added importance. In May, Kosovo was recognised by UEFA. After years of isolation, cut off from the rest of the football world, this season's league champions will qualify for European competition. In addition, Kosovar teams can now benefit from a transfer system, rather than seeing their players taken on the cheap. Funds are also available to help rebuild the region's infrastructure and stadia, much of it – like Gjilani and Drita's shared home – crumbling through neglect.

A few weeks after UEFA acceptance, FIFA also recognised Kosovo, allowing the national team to join the 2018 World Cup qualification campaign.

Placed in Group I alongside Croatia, Ukraine and Iceland, Kosovo played its first match, against Finland, in September and came away with a creditable 1-1 draw.

Long-time Kosovo national coach Albert Bunjaki is in Gjilan too, watching the derby, somewhere among the smoke. In a few days time, his side will play a first competitive "home" match, against Croatia, even though the game has to be staged in Albania as Kosovo still has no FIFA-approved stadiums.

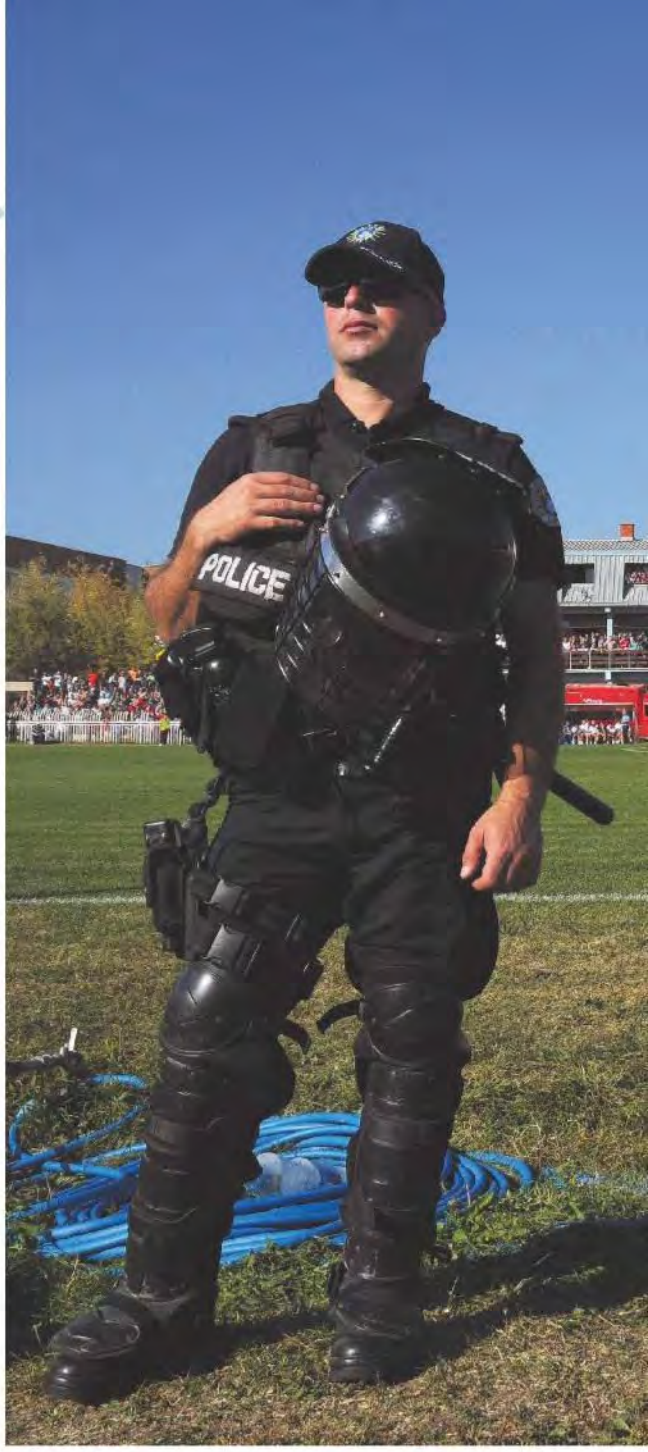
Bunjaki has come to check on the local talent, but not much football is taking place thanks to the flares and smoke bombs. Someone is also piloting a drone carrying a blue Drita flag.

"We are supporting the 'Dardanet', they are the supporters group of the Kosovo national team, and we are going, we will support against Croatia," shouts Andi Ismaili, a 21-year-old member of the Drita ultras group "The Intellectuals", through the smoke and the heavy metal fence during the enforced break in play.

"We are Kosovo, we are a free republic. We promise this is just the beginning. The world will know who the hell is Kosovo. We will win all games!"

But not the derby itself, as Gjilani won 1-0, with a 97th-minute goal sparking wild celebrations. Drita's players sat in front of their fans at the end in a masochistic ritual of punishment and catharsis. The fans hurled abuse down from the stands as the team meekly nodded in agreement.

"It was crazy," Bunjaki said later of the




**Security...riot police on duty at the Gjilan City Stadium**

**Punishment...Drita players sit in front of their fans after losing the derby to Gjilani**

chaotic scenes at the match. "But you should have seen it last year. It was a competition to see who could throw the most bombs. If one group threw 10 bombs, the other group wanted to throw 20. It is blue against red."

This, however, was the relative calm before the storm for Kosovo's coach.

For the past seven years, Bunjaki has been patiently waiting for the day when he could take charge of his team for a competitive game. Politics had always got in the way and matches were not allowed against official FIFA members.

Teams would pull out when they were told that their governments did not recognise Kosovo, and there was fierce opposition from Serbia, which views Kosovo as a historic and inviolable part of its territory. It was only in 2014, in a move pushed by Sepp Blatter, Kosovo was allowed to play friendlies against other FIFA members, albeit with no flags or national anthems.

> "We promise this is just the beginning. The world will know who the hell is Kosovo"
>
> **Kosovo ultra Andi Ismaili**

It was Bunjaki who led the team out for their first official match, against Haiti, in front of a packed Adem Jashari Stadium in the northern city of Mitrovica. It rained hard, was freezing cold and ended 0-0, but the packed crowd sang throughout.

Eventually, opposition to Kosovo's membership of UEFA and FIFA – something that seemed impossible when Kosovo unilaterally declared independence in 2008 – melted away as a majority of UN member states recognised the self-declared republic. Even though UEFA's statutes forbid membership to those without formal UN recognition, Kosovo narrowly won the UEFA vote.

The next struggle was to build a team as the war had spread hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees across Europe. Bunjaki, who in 1989 was a promising player for Pristina, fled after being called up to the Yugoslav army and watched the war in isolation from Sweden. He didn't see his family for a decade.

Some of Europe's best players had Kosovar roots, not least most of the Swiss and Albanian national teams, including Gjilan's most famous son, Xherdan Shaqiri of Stoke City, and Arsenal's Granit Xhaka. In the end, FIFA made it all but impossible for those big-name players to switch nationalities. Instead, Bunjaki chose

younger players who had only played a few games at international level, such as talented 20-year-old Vitesse winger Milot Rashica or, more controversially, midfielder Valon Berisha, who had played 19 games for Norway.

Before the Finland game, 13 members of the squad were still waiting for FIFA clearance to switch from one national team to Kosovo. Just a few hours before the match, five players – including Berisha, Rashica and the goalkeeper Samir Ujkani – still didn't know if they could play. They were approved with only hours to spare.

"At that moment I was crying. I can't explain. You need to feel it. And I did. I felt it with my heart and brain and all my body," Bunjaki recalls of the moment his team were lined up for the national anthems in the Finnish city of Turku.

"If you ask me about my life, I would choose my daughter's birth as the most important moment. And this was the second most special moment in my life."

Finland took the lead in that game, but after half-time Kosovo dominated with their young team of effervescent wingers – Rashica being the standout – who appeared to have no interest in defending. Few knew how they would play, including Bunjaki who'd only had a few days with his full squad. Eventually they got their chance with a second-half penalty and Berisha stepped up to take it.

"When the other players got the permission [to play], I was pissed because I was the last one. I didn't think I'd get it," said Berisha of those few hours before the game. "But then I got it and I was happy and played with a lot of emotion."

There was, he said, only one person who was going to take the penalty.

"In that moment when I got the ball I was so sure I was going to score," he said. "I looked around me first I didn't know who was going to take it. But I decided I would put the ball down. I was confident.

"Even though the goalkeeper guessed the right way, I put so much emotion and pace on the penalty. I just wanted to score for my country."

Berisha's switch wasn't universally applauded in Norway, where he had grown up. But his brother Veton decided to stay with the Norway team, a decision he believes made the switch easier for both of them. "We showed the appreciation to Norway, we both didn't leave and we wanted to show we were raised there and they gave us a good life," he said.

**Support...Kosovo fans arrive in Albania before the game against Croatia**

> "In that moment when I got the ball I was so sure I was going to score"
>
> **Valon Berisha, on getting Kosovo's first goal**

**Historic...Amir Rrahmani (far left) and Enis Alushi celebrate drawing away to Finland**

The Finland result had raised expectations in Kosovo and among the diaspora, but Berisha was cautious. The 2020 European Championship was the team's aim, he said. The team was young, and they were still working out how they were going to play, still working out their identity on the pitch. "In every game we go into, we are the underdog," he said. "So we can only win."

Bunjaki was only waiting on two players who wanted to switch nationality ahead of the two back-to-back games against Croatia and Ukraine: Arber Zeneli, from Sweden's under-21 team, and goalkeeper Adis Nurkovic, who once represented Bosnia and qualified via marriage to his Kosovar wife. But this time the coach decided that the team needed a few days in Kosovo, with open training. Hundreds of fans came to see the team.

Almost every member of the team had left Kosovo before the age of five and had little memory of Kosovo, so language was an issue too, with Bunjaki giving the talks in Albanian but giving extra instruction in English and Swedish.

"I wanted two days to be here to get all the energy from here," he said. "I wanted them to think about the road the country has been through, the war and isolation. Everyone has their own history."

Bunjaki had also envisaged something different. He had played in Pristina, but the stadium was being renovated. "It is a little bit strange as I have dreamed many times of this game, our first home game," he said. "You are thinking with pictures how this game would look. In my dreams it

United...Kosovo and Albania scarves on sale in Shkoder

"At that moment I was crying. I can't explain. You need to feel it. And I did"

**Kosovo coach Albert Bunjaki on lining up for the national anthems in the Finnish city of Turku**

**Proud...Albert Bunjaki**

would be in Pristina.

"It is not the same as playing in the city that I played in as a child. Or the city I was born in. But it is a great feeling."

The team coach left for the four-hour drive, to Shkoder in northern Albania, through a scrum of journalists and local dignitaries eager to be close to history.

On the day of the match, eight coaches met outside FC Pristina's stadium in the centre of the capital. Workmen could be seen on the vast concrete structure, grinding, banging and drilling as sparks flew over the protective fencing. Several hundred members of the Dardanet, the ultras of the Kosovo national team, had met to take the journey to the stadium.

There was, however, one problem. This was the first proper meeting of the group. Like the nearby stadium, everything had to be built anew. New songs had to be written and learned.

"I'd say the first couple of games are huge just because we are still getting an identity. Who are the fans? We are still getting to know our players," said Hasan Leku, a 24-year-old fan waiting to get on one of the buses. He'd travelled all the way from Victoria in Canada, where he resettled after being displaced by the war in 1998.

**Training...goalkeeper Adis Nurkovic works out in front of fans**

"It is pretty much as far as it is possible to travel," he laughed as the drivers busied themselves fixing Kosovo flags to the front of their coaches next to us.

For many fans and even many players, the issue of Kosovo's identity was still a controversial one. The country's blue, yellow and white flag is a recent construct, as is the national anthem. Both remain surprisingly unpopular in Kosovo itself. Kosovo is ethnically Albanian and the language is Albanian. You will see the Albanian black-and-red eagle flown everywhere in Pristina, but seldom the Kosovo flag. Some fans have even said they will not support the team until it becomes a united Albanian team.

Albania's captain at Euro 2016, Lorik Cana, was born in Kosovo. Even though he supported the creation of a Kosovo team, he told me in 2012 that he would not switch because Albania should be the team for all ethnic Albanians.

"Before Kosovo was a country, Albania was the only team we could support on the national stage," explains Leku. "People feel almost guilty abandoning that team. People feel like they have to make a decision. For me it is not that complicated. I'll always identify as Albanian but I'll support both."

He was more worried about Croatia. "They have one of the best counter-attacking teams in the world," he said.

The convoy of supporters' coaches inched through the Pristina traffic, with the horn permanently pressed down, as the fans were taught the lyrics to new songs. A leader of one of Kosovo's main ultras groups taught them how to sing each one. By the third attempt, everyone had each song down perfectly.

Along the way more coaches joined the procession until more than 20 arrived at the Albanian border, a border that was

Loyal...on a fans' coach from Pristina

closed for more than 50 years under the rule of Albania's isolationist communist dictator Enver Hoxha. The hundreds left their seats and ran across the boarder like an invading army, letting off fireworks as well as yellow and blue smoke grenades. The Albanian border guards waved them through with a smile, taking pictures on their phones as they passed.

The Loro Borici Stadium in Shkoder was packed an hour before kick-off, even though torrential rain had been falling most of the evening. The Dardanet unfurled a tifo they had been planning. It read: "Raised by Wolves, Stronger Than Fear".The Croatian fans started chanting "Death to the Serbs." Before long the whole stadium was repeating it.

Within five minutes Croatia were 1-0 up and by half-time Mario Mandzukic had a hat-trick. Kosovo kept attacking, creating chance after chance, and even having three one-on-ones, but they missed all of them. Rashica, in particular, terrified Croatia's defence, but Kosovo's attacking verve left the defence exposed and Croatia clinically picked them off on the break.

It finished 6-0, the sixth goal with the very last kick of the game, in a freezing cold deluge. Kosovo had been taught the harsh realities of international football.

Two days later, in the dugout at the Marshal Jozef Pilsudski Stadium in the Polish city of Krakow, Bunjaki is still angry at his team's capitulation. "Of course it was tough but we had chances to score," he says, downbeat. "They had seven chances, they score six. We have seven and we didn't score, that is a big difference.

"Everyone knows it is too early to win against Croatia, but I am happy with one thing. We made a lot of chances against Croatia, but we need to work with the defensive balance."

> "They had seven chances, they score six. We have seven and we didn't score. That is a big difference"
> **Kosovo coach Albert Bunjaki on the Croatia game**

March... Kosovo fans are escorted in Albania

It is 24 hours before the next qualification match against Ukraine and the flight from Tirana to Krakow was quiet. The players spoke of their embarrassment, but also about how thankful they were to have a game just three days later, to put it right. But there was a chance that the Ukraine game wasn't going to happen at all. Ukraine does not recognise Kosovo and refused to host the game in Kiev.

Neighbouring Poland was suggested as an alternative, but the Polish police were close to cancelling the game. They feared that violent Polish hooligans would turn up to fight with the few hundred Ukrainian fans who'd made the long journey.

At the last minute the game was given the go-ahead. "I don't think this is fair because we got the answer a week ago," said Bunjaki. "Why can't we play in Ukraine? This is football not politics."

The Croatia game had shown Kosovo's strengths, its passion and effervescence in attack, but also its weaknesses in defence. "I was very angry, especially with the last goal," said, Bunjaki. "I feel very sad. Now we have a chance to at least show another way. We will fight."

There were just a few hundred fans inside the stadium. A large blue-and-gold Ukrainian flag had been pulled over one set of seats. The national anthems and periodic chants echoed around the empty stands before the referee's whistle started the game.

Both teams had bigger reasons to want to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. Kosovo, as a new football nation, if not a recognised country, would send an important message to Russia, the 2018 hosts, who have politically blocked

Danger...Kosovo try to contain Croatia's Andrej Kramaric

Vocal...fans are in good voice before the Croatia game

Kosovo's recognition at the UN Security Council. Meanwhile, the Ukraine team – now coached by Andriy Shevchenko – would also send a message to Russia, with war raging in the east of the country, if they qualified.

No Polish hooligans arrived to cause trouble, and Kosovo began the game much more solidly, creating less chances but defending more resolutely. It took a heavily deflected own goal from Amir Rrahmani to give Ukraine the lead. Kosovo pressed and hit the bar in the second half, but two late goals killed them off. Again they couldn't take their chances and Bunjaki's side lost 3-0.

After the adulation of Finland, the games against Croatia and Ukraine had held Kosovo, and their coach, up to a harsh light.

"I want to go home, to see my family," he said after the game. "I feel we played good against Ukraine. But..." He was stopped half way through by a passing Shevchenko, who wished him the best. "He said, 'You have a very good team'," said Bunjaki, smiling. "We played a good team. It has been emotional. I feel it. We are tired."

When asked what he had learned from the last two games, Bunjaki replied: "Teams don't need much to score."

The Kosovo team coach was waiting outside the stadium with the engine running. November will see the team travel to Antalya to play Turkey, then there is a five-month break during which Kosovo and Bunjaki can take stock.

"We started quite good!" said an upbeat Valon Berisha, standing next to the coach as the players filed quietly on. "In almost every situation we need time. We need to be patient. We will get better."

The pressure on the team had been huge, but Berisha had seen enough to know that better days were ahead.

"It has been hard when you lose 6-0 against Croatia," he admitted. "But that's what I mean. We had chances. We aren't playing too bad. We will develop and get to know each other. We are young and creative. We just want to go forward and score goals. But we get punished."

He boarded the coach back to the airport, and back to reality. WS

**Battle...Bernard Berisha in action against Ukraine**

6 of the best

# Home-grown revelations

Nick Bidwell profiles some of the most exciting players to have come through their own club ranks in recent seasons

## 1 Filip BENKOVIC

**DINAMO ZAGREB**

When it comes to polishing rough diamonds, few clubs do it as well and as prolifically as Dinamo Zagreb. And the latest off the production line is this towering Croatia under-21 international, who has been attracting admiring glances from the rest of Europe.

Described by ex-Dinamo coach Zoran Mamic as a "very modern type of stopper", the 19-year-old fits the 21st-century bill: technically sound, a good reader of the game, quick to sense danger and clean in his interventions.

A Dinamo player since his early teens, he knows that sooner or later he will have to move on. At present, though, he's in no hurry, content to stay in his home city, feature for the dominant force in the country and to top up his experience in the Champions League.

One of the favourites to sign him will be Fiorentina, whose director of sport and ace talent-spotter Pantaleo Corvino has a network of Balkan scouts to die for.

## 2 Manuel LOCATELLI

**MILAN**

If celebrating his first start of the season with a goal in Milan's 4-3 victory over Sassuolo was a sign of the 18-year-old's potential, scoring the winner when the *Rossoneri* beat Juventus in late October thrust the rookie central midfielder firmly into the spotlight.

With Milan since the age of 11, he is a former skipper of the club's youth team and represented his country at the Euro Under-17 Championship in 2015 and the following year's under-19 version – in which Italy finished runners-up.

A teenager of vision, precise distribution and no little tenacity, he cites Andrea Pirlo and Francesco Totti as his all-time favourite players. And should the cards fall the right way, he too could be a similar showstopper.

## 3 Gelson MARTINS

**SPORTING**

No wonder Real Madrid are reported to be monitoring the right-winger. The quicksilver 21-year-old from the Cape Verde archipelago had Real defenders all at sea in his club's unlucky 2-1 loss to the Galacticos in September, and Sporting coach Jorge Jesus views him as a one-man wrecking ball.

"He's capable of breaking any left-back," said Jesus after a 4-2 win against Estoril this season. "There's no one like him in Portugal."

Won his first cap for Portugal in a recent World Cup qualifier against Andorra and is under contract to Sporting until 2021, although he does have a €60m release clause.

On the Lisbon club's books since 2010, he attributes much of his one-on-one play to his early years admiring Brazilian winger Robinho.

## 4 Abdelhak NOURI

**AJAX**

After several years of rave reviews for Ajax's youth and reserve teams, the 19-year-old attacking midfielder finally made his competitive debut for the Amsterdammers this autumn – coming off the bench to score a wonderful free-kick in a the 5-0 Dutch Cup win over Willem II.

Known as "Appie", he joined such names as Johan Cruyff, Marco Van Basten, Frank Rijkaard and Patrick Kluivert in the select band of debutant scorers for Ajax. And while coach Peter Bosz does not want to pile too much pressure on him, the indicators suggest the Amsterdam-born starlet of Moroccan descent is primed and ready for big things.

Spellbinding in his technique, touch and desire for responsibility, he captained Holland under-19s at this summer's Euros in Germany.

## 5 Corentin TOLISSO

**LYON**

OL supporters breathed a huge sigh of relief when the France under-21s' skipper turned down a move to Napoli this summer, explaining that he still had unfinished business at the club he joined as a schoolboy and that he was happy in his "comfort zone".

He has featured in both full-back roles, as a holding midfielder, a number 10 and a deep-lying striker for Lyon, and this season coach Bruno Genesio has experimented with him in the "hole". And very well it's worked out too, with the 22-year-old claiming a goal and an assist in the 3-0 Champions League victory over Dinamo Zagreb.

He has fought back splendidly from his low points of last season: a dressing-room altercation with team-mate Lindsay Rose and a careless loss of possession which led to Saint-Etienne's victory in the Rhone derby.

## 6 Lucas VAZQUEZ

**REAL MADRID**

With Real's attacking width very much the property of Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale, the Galician winger has to make do with the role of understudy. But a lack of game time has not stopped the 25-year-old from making a huge impact in the last year or so.

At his best on the right, his great strength is that he not only offers incisiveness when cutting inside but that he is also incredibly diligent off the ball, always there in support of his full-back.

In terms of work ethic, he is exemplary and thoroughly deserves his current place in Spain's national squad. A graduate of Real's youth ranks, he was sold to Espanyol in the summer of 2014, but would retrace his steps within a year when his buy-back clause was activated.

If not a footballer, he would now be earning a living at his family's restaurant in Curtis near La Coruna.

# Mind the gap

International football is falling further and further behind the club game, says Jonathan Wilson

**Struggle...Sergio Aguero is a top talent, but Argentina always miss Lionel Messi**

International football is something that ought to be refreshing. In some ways, it's a purer form of the game than club football as it's not (directly) about money. Money can help you put in place better facilities and better programmes for youth development, but it can't buy you the best centre-forward in the world when you've gone a couple of games without a goal. It's about pride in an idea and making the most of the hand fate has dealt you. It's something that has the capacity to unite a nation, if only for a couple of hours.

Yet, in truth, every time it comes round to break the rhythm of the league season, there is a profound sense of anticlimax. Each international break serves only to emphasise the gulf in quality between the game at club and country level.

There are odd exceptions, particularly among the best sides, but the vast majority of teams at international level seem to have no great plan beyond packing men behind the ball and hoping for the best.

That is understandable, as coaches have so little time to work with players, and there's so little continuity that it makes sense to focus on keeping things tight, on getting the foundations right and hoping the rest will follow. But it doesn't make for a great spectacle.

It's a problem exacerbated by the mismatches that so commonly exist in international football. Qualification may be exciting for mid-ranking nations who get to major finals infrequently, but for the bigger sides, those with a realistic chance of getting to the latter stages of the tournament, unless they're going through some sort of Holland-style crisis, the qualification road is often a dull slog.

There is a place in the game for weaker sides sitting deep, resisting with all their will against stronger opponents – that valiant rearguards can be successful is one of football's most appealing aspects – but that shouldn't be the template for every game. The best football, surely, comes from two evenly matched sides both trying to attack each other.

England, to take just one example, haven't played a team who've come at them in a competitive game since Switzerland in the second half of their

Rare test...England's Raheem Sterling takes on Switzerland

Star...Neymar is the centre of attention for Brazil

Euro qualifier in September 2014. That means not only that they'll be ill-equipped should they ever reach, say, the last eight of a major tournament and have to play Germany or Spain, but that most of the games they're involved in are, from an objective point of view, dull.

Of course, that will only get worse if the World Cup, as now seems inevitable, expands. Not only will an element of jeopardy be taken out of qualifying, with more teams to reach the finals, but the quality of those finals will be diluted.

If decisions were taken for the good of the game, rather than for reasons of greed and base politicking dressed up as concern for development, the World Cup finals would stay at 32 teams (or perhaps even be reduced in size) and there would be a greater intercontinental aspect to qualifying. This would increase variety and interest, and raise the standards of the finals itself.

It may also aid team-building if there were fewer, longer international breaks so they became events in themselves rather than unwelcome interruptions to the main business, which is what they feel like at the moment. As it is, international football finds itself in the paradoxical position where the majority of the most intriguing fixtures are friendlies that nobody cares about because they're non-competitive.

But that's an argument for elsewhere. What the most recent World Cup qualifiers confirmed was not merely the retrograde nature of international football but an old-fashioned focus on one individual.

Perhaps to an extent this was always the case. Brazil always seemed to have talent aplenty, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s it was reasonable to think of Argentina as Diego Maradona and his supporting cast; of France as Michel Platini and others, of Romania as Gheorghe Hagi and the rest; of Yugoslavia as Dragan Stojkovic plus 10.

That tendency, though, seems more pronounced now. For a country of the stature and traditions of Wales, who are currently blessed with a Gareth Bale, that's natural. DR Congo with a Yannick Bolasie, Uruguay with a Luis Suarez, Gabon with a Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang or Slovakia with a Marek Hamsik all perhaps fall also into a similar category.

But what's striking in recent times is how the phenomenon has spread to more established football nations. Even if they ultimately won the Final without him, Portugal's triumph at Euro 2016 was based on a defensive block plus Cristiano Ronaldo. Perhaps that's not overly surprising: Portugal is, after all, a nation of just 10.5million people whose history shows lengthy spells without success.

What's more shocking is how Brazil have become almost entirely about Neymar. Perhaps their reliance upon him speaks of a dearth of emerging talent which, given Brazil's traditions and population of just over 200m would be a truly shaming thought. But there seemed something almost wilful about the situation, as though there was a perceived need both to produce a celebrity to compete with Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, and to play with a designated star, even if Tite and the emergence of Gabriel Jesus are beginning to change that.

> International football finds itself in the paradoxical position where the majority of the most intriguing fixtures are friendlies that nobody cares about

Messi, of course, is the biggest example of dependence on an individual of all. For all the talent in Argentina, despite Sergio Aguero, Gonzalo Higuain and Angel Di Maria, their recent form without Messi is dismal, with only one win in seven qualifiers without him.

The question then is why? There will be individual answers in each case – in Argentina, the Messi-dependence is at least partly psychological – but generally speaking it's a facet of time.

It's simply not possible for international coaches to spends hours and hours honing the sort of slick interactions commonly practised at club level.

The result is a lowest-common denominator aspect to the international game: get the defence right and hope a piece of individual brilliance can unlock the opposition. WS

Individual...Gheorghe Hagi was the undoubted main attraction of Romania's side

BVB
09

# Melting pot

**WORDS:** Nick Bidwell

The reigning African Player of the Year is a man of many influences. Born in France, he started his career in Italy, represents Gabon, is now starring in Germany and could move to Spain next summer

Anyone with Milan's best interests at heart must wince whenever they hear about the latest exploits of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, the €50million-rated Borussia Dortmund sharpshooter and reigning African Player of the Year.

Before becoming one of the most coveted players in the world – and rumoured to be on the shopping lists of Real Madrid and Manchester City – PEA, as he is known, was a teenage professional in the hallowed halls of Milan. However, he never got any further than the youth team and was eventually shipped out on loan to a string of French sides – Dijon, Lille, Monaco and Saint-Etienne – before, to all intents and purposes, he was forgotten and then discarded.

The French-born superstar-to-be is very much the one that got away for Milan, a source of considerable regret at a club which has neglected its academy for far too long and has been vainly chasing past glories these past few years.

"He's had his revenge," declared close friend and former Milan under-19 keeper Gianmarco Campironi in a 2014 interview with the Pianeta Milan website. "Nowadays, someone like him would have made the jump to the Milan pros.

"Although the club's economic difficulties have played their part, Milan today are braver in giving a chance to their youngsters. Back then, the policy was not particularly one of continuity, and the likes of Aubameyang were allowed to go."

Lining up in the same Milan junior side as future Manchester United and Italy full-back Matteo Darmian and current Atalanta striker Alberto Paloschi, Aubameyang only spent 18 months

## Timeline

**AUG 1, 2008**
Makes his debut for Dijon, on loan from Milan, in a 3-1 defeat at Lens in Ligue 2.

**MAR 28, 2009**
Scores on his international debut for Gabon in a 2-1 win away to Morocco.

**JUN 24, 2009**
After a season at Dijon, he joins Lille – also on loan.

**AUG 6, 2009**
Comes on as a sub for his Lille debut, in a 2-0 Europa League win at home to Sevojno of Serbia.

**AUG 21, 2010**
Now on loan at Monaco, he scores his first goal for the club in a 2-2 draw away to Lens.

with the *Rossoneri* but impressed his team-mates nonetheless. Nigerian midfielder Wilfred Osuji insists he fully expected to see PEA's name in lights, while striker Emanuele Orlandi especially remembers the striker for his remarkable pace – which remains one of his strong suits to this day.

"Everything he did was at great speed," Orlandi told French magazine *So Foot*. "On getting past his opponent in a one-on-one, it was all over. You could tell he had a future in the game, but I probably wouldn't have bet on him ending up at Borussia Dortmund."

The highlight of his time with Milan was undoubtedly his extraordinary body of work at the 2007 Champions Youth Cup in Malaysia, a one-off precursor to the NextGen Series and the UEFA Youth League. The scorer of all seven of Milan's goals in the competition – on target against Flamengo, Ajax, Arsenal, Bayern Munich and Juventus – he almost single-handedly dragged his side into the semi-finals while earning the top-scorer award.

That explosive summer in south-east Asia was, however, to be as good as it got at Milan.

> "He walks on water. He is like Moses. He parts the sea"
> **Christophe Galtier, former Saint-Etienne coach**

Compared to the big-name strikers on the club's books – Ronaldinho, Pato, Inzaghi, Shevchenko – the youngster was at best an irrelevance and, after a flurry of loan spells, he signed a permanent deal with Saint-Etienne late in 2011.

His then-Milan youth-team coach Filippo Galli, who had been an excellent central defender in the club's great side of the late 1980s and early 1990s, clearly has regrets that the young man never had the chance to strut his stuff at the San Siro. "The decision [to let him leave] was not down to me," he told Tutto Mercato Web. "Pierre always was a very useful player to have at your disposal, an attacker of great potential. He was very willing, was quick to learn and extremely adaptable.

"As his first coach, I've a deep emotional bond with him."

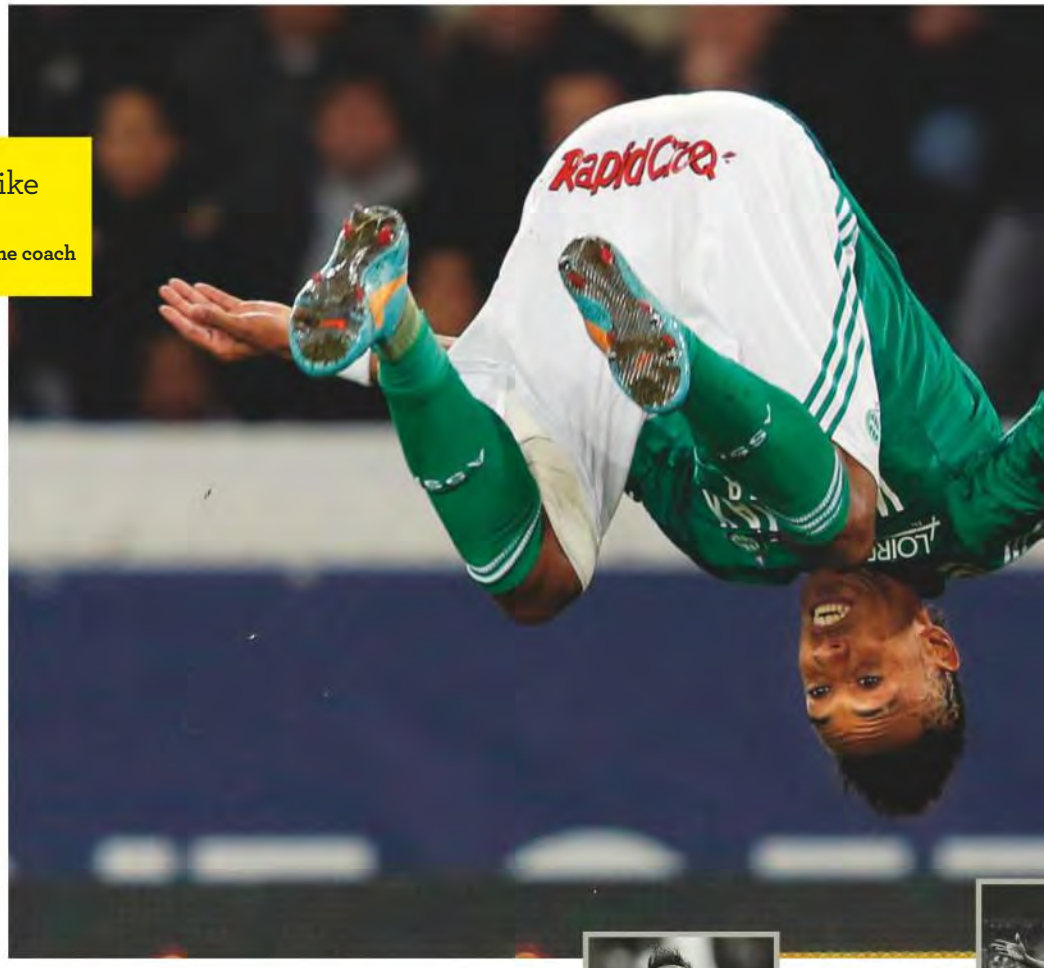
For quite some time, PEA felt he had not been treated fairly by Milan and was particularly keen to vent his spleen when talking to *Gazzetta dello Sport* in 2012 about his good form for Saint-Etienne. "They didn't believe in me," he exclaimed. "So now I want to show them that they made a mistake."

On the up...playing in Europe with Lille

But now, at the grand old age of 27, and with his sporting stock at its zenith, he is much more sanguine about his Italian rejection. "In France, many say that Milan didn't give me a chance," he commented in *So Foot*. "However, the truth is that with the players they had, where were they going to play me?"

Aubameyang was, in fact, the fourth member of his family to be employed by Milan. His father, Pierre, a former French-based Gabon international central defender or midfield holder, worked for the Milanese giants as a scout, having apparently talked himself into the job during a chance meeting with then-Milan administrator Ariedo Braida at Venice airport. Pierre-Emerick's elder brothers Catilina and Willy both managed to achieve what he could not and bridged the gap between youth and first team, albeit in a short-lived fashion. Wide midfielder Catilina made a handful of senior appearances in the early part of the noughties, while striker Willy swiftly faded from view after scoring the winner against Juventus in the 2007 edition of the pre-season Berlusconi Trophy.

Absolutely key to the younger sibling's development into a world-class goal machine is the influence of his father and agent, whom PEA often refers to as "*Le Guide*". With his dad constantly on the move during his playing days – turning out for five French sides as well as Triestina in Italy and Colombian side Junior Barranquilla – he was not only a first-hand witness to the life of the football nomad



Flip...demonstrating his trademark goal celebration while at Saint-Etienne

**FEB 5, 2011**
On loan to Saint-Etienne for the rest of the season, he makes his debut in a 2-1 win away to Montpellier.

**APR 9, 2011**
Scores his first goal for Saint-Etienne in a 2-2 draw away to Auxerre.

**FEB 5, 2012**
Has a penalty saved in the African Nations Cup quarter-final shoot-out against Mali as co-hosts Gabon exit the tournament.

**FEB 22, 2012**
Now permanently at Saint Etienne, scores his first hat-trick, in a 4-2 win at home to Lorient.

**JUL 26, 2012**
Scores Gabon's only goal of the London Olympics, in their opening match of the tournament against Switzerland in Newcastle.

but lived and breathed the sport.

Mindful that his own father had actively tried to discourage him from making a career in the game, Aubameyang senior was determined, perhaps even obsessed, that his sons should follow in his footsteps and, in the case of PEA, he has never been far from his side, offering advice, encouragement, home truths and, of course, connections.

"At each step of my career, my dad has done the best for me," PEA declared in an interview with *L'Equipe* early this year. "In 2012, when I'd just had a great goalscoring season for Saint-Etienne, I received an offer from Qatar worth €10million a year. If I'd accepted, my family would have been set up for life. Yet, we decided to stay at Saint-Etienne, where I was earning €70,000 a month.

"The following season, Saint-Etienne wanted to sell me to Newcastle but, in the end, we plumped for a lower offer from Dortmund because my father had been studying Klopp's playing style. It's the reason I see my dad as my prophet."

**Big brother...Willy Aubameyang in action for Milan**

Aubameyang the elder also played a predominant role in his son's choice of national team. Born and bred in the town of Laval in western France, PEA made one friendly appearance for the France under-21s, in February 2009, but a month later opted to represent Gabon, citing his father's 80-cap association with the Panthers and his desire to become an African great; a Gabonese version of Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o – who is a friend of the Aubameyangs – or Didier Drogba with Ivory Coast.

PEA often makes a point of drawing attention to his Spanish links and he could have played for *La Roja*. His mother, Magarita, hails from the city of Avila in the Castilla y Leon region and her late father, Jose Crespos, Aubameyang's grandfather, was an avid follower of Real Madrid.

Whether on the maternal or paternal side, family means a lot for Pierre-Emerick and he certainly needed his father's wise counsel on returning to France after his spell at Milan. While he proved reasonably successful in the second tier with Dijon, in subsequent top-flight postings at Lille and Monaco he struggled for the most part, generally cast in the local media as a mere speedster who lacked touch, awareness and finishing ability.

**Brief...he started to show glimpses of his potential at Monaco**

For a short period at Monaco he looked as though he was finally making progress, but following the replacement of coach Guy Lacombe with Laurent Banide, he once again found himself out in the cold.

Lacombe admits that even some of his own staff tried to talk him out of picking Pierre-Emerick when in charge of Monaco. "I thought he was an extraordinarily athletic player," says Lacombe. "He was pacy, made darting runs and was lively on his feet. Technically he wasn't Maradona, but I felt he had something about him.

"He was only 21 and the club didn't give him time. Someone took a dislike to him and he found it hard to cope."

Early in 2011 he was loaned out again, this time heading for the football hot spot of Saint-Etienne. While his first six months there were nothing to write home about, he began to take flight in the opening rounds of the 2011-12 campaign. He signed permanently for *Les Verts* and went on a goal blitz, scoring 16 that season and 19 the next, and helping the team win the French League Cup in 2013.

"He walks on water," once gushed Saint-Etienne coach Christophe Galtier. "He is like Moses. He parts the sea."

Several factors contributed to his spectacular emergence at Saint-Etienne. The decision of Galtier to use him mainly on the right wing, which gave him licence to cut inside at will; Galtier's total faith in him and the fact that for the first time in years he actually "belonged" to a club; and the electrifying fervour of the crowd at the Stade Geoffroy-Guichard.

The man himself, though, had another interpretation. "I'm now the father of a little boy and that's a life-changing moment," he told Lyon daily *Le Progres*. "I think of him and his future. I want to do well so that he wants for nothing and is proud of me."

On the surface his image is that of the flamboyant showman, with his somersault goal celebrations and the Spider-Man mask he once donned after scoring for Dortmund in 2014. His love of bling, fast cars, avant-garde hairstyles and the gold-lame jacket he once wore on a French TV programme, only add to that impression. But drill down deeper and you will find a much simpler soul.

Rather than taking a holiday in a sun-drenched luxury resort half-way across the world, he prefers to return to Laval to relax with family and friends, and whenever he has the chance he goes there to promote a charity or support a sporting project.

"It's a need I have," he declared to local

**APR 20, 2013**

Wins his first trophy as Saint-Etienne beat Rennes 1-0 in the French League Cup Final in Saint Denis.

**JUN 15, 2013**

Scores a hat-trick of penalties in Gabon's 4-1 win at home to Niger in a World Cup qualifying tie.

**AUG 10, 2013**

Scores a hat-trick for Borussia Dortmund on his Bundesliga debut, in a 4-0 win away to Augsburg on the opening day of the season.

newspaper *Ouest-France*. "I'm back in Laval four or five times a year. I adore it. Far from the din of Dortmund I feel at ease. One time I took a holiday elsewhere. I couldn't stand it.

"Every time I leave Laval after a holiday there, I feel great in mind and body. I return to Dortmund full of energy."

A town of some 50,000 inhabitants in the Mayenne region, Laval is where it all began for Aubameyang. Kicking his first ball at the age of five at the L'Huisserie club in the southern suburbs, he went on to shine up front for the schoolboy section of Stade Lavallois, the club where his father arguably played the best football of his pro career.

The accusation which used to be levelled at PEA was that he was a beneficiary of nepotism, that he would not have become a professional without his father pulling strings and calling in favours. But that's far from the whole story. Besides an unshakeable belief that pro football was his calling, he always knew that talent alone was not enough and that the hard yards had to be put in.

After prematurely leaving school at 15, he was so determined to be prepared for any future trials that he spent six months in Laval on a punishing daily training regime, going on cross-country runs, working on his sprinting and aiming to copy the finishing skills of top-of-the bill Lyon attackers Sonny Anderson and Sidney Govou.

Friends wondered if he was wasting his time. Not that he was willing to listen. And soon he would be vindicated, deemed good enough to be admitted to the youth ranks of Le Havre, Bastia and Milan.

This work ethic and dedication to his craft remain core characteristics today. Take his reaction to being benched by Jurgen Klopp in the latter stages of his first campaign at Dortmund. Informed by the coach that he had to offer more than blistering speed and that he was not pulling his weight defensively, he might have sulked or turned disruptive. Instead, he plumped for putting in some overtime on the training ground.

**Lucky number...he wears number 17 for Dortmund**

**Super hero...donning the Spider-Man mask**

> "Having the chance to play through the middle was the turning point for me"

Back in the starting line-up for the start of the following season, he appeared to have a firmer handle on the Klopp system. More tuned in to the needs of the team, more flexible, better technically, and a far more composed taker of chances in front of goal, most of his 16 Bundesliga goals that season came after he made the switch from the right wing to centre-forward.

"Having the chance to play through the middle was the turning point for me," said Aubameyang during a conversation with ex-French international midfielder, Luis Fernandez on his Radio Monte Carlo show early this year. "Basically, it's my favourite position. It allows me to be in better shape when it comes to finishing. Playing out wide is more demanding effort-wise. Now I can be in the danger zone all the time."

A couple of years after the departure of Polish ace Robert Lewandowski for Bayern Munich, Dortmund had at last filled the void. And just to underline the message, the Gabon front man was to prove even sharper last season under a new boss at the Westfalenstadion, Thomas Tuchel, delivering the mammoth consignment of 39 goals in all competitions.

Quite rightly, Aubameyang has plenty of praise for the way in which Klopp and Tuchel have brought the best out of him, but he also owes a debt of gratitude to the German game as a whole. Characterised by its dynamism, freshness and open, attack-minded style of play, the Bundesliga is tailor-made for him and it will be interesting to see how he fares should he move to England or Spain in a not-too distant future.

Made in Africa, Germany, France and Italy, Aubameyang can't help stirring the melting pot. WS

**Award...with the African Player of the Year trophy in January 2016**

**MAY 17, 2014**
Plays the last seven minutes as sub as Borussia Dortmund are beaten 2-0 by Bayern Munich in the German Cup Final.

**JAN 17, 2015**
Scores Gabon's opening goal of their African Nations Cup campaign in a 2-0 win over Burkina Faso.

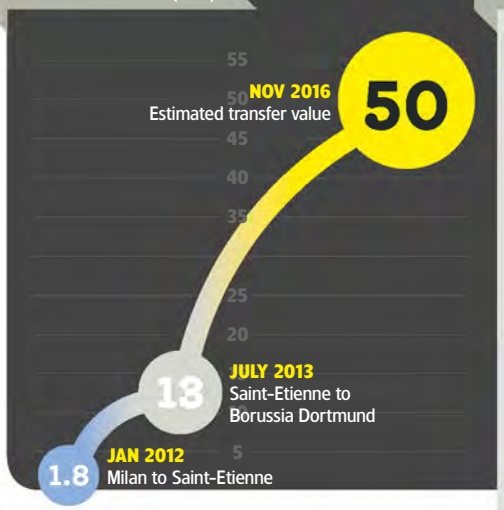
**MAY 30, 2015**
Scores after five minutes in the German Cup Final against Wolfsburg, but Dortmund go on to lose 3-1.

**OCT 4, 2015**
On target in a 5-1 loss at Bayern Munich to set a Bundesliga record of scoring in the opening eight games of the season.

# Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

## the numbers game

### TRANSFER FEES (€m)




### GABON

**51**

CAPS

GOALS

**21**

### AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

**NEXT YEAR WILL SEE AUBAMEYANG PLAY IN HIS FOURTH FINALS**

| Year | Hosts | Reached |
|---|---|---|
| 2017 | Gabon | to be decided |
| 2015 | Eq Guinea | Group stage |
| 2012 | Gabon & Eq Guinea | Quarter-finals |
| 2010 | Angola | Group stage |

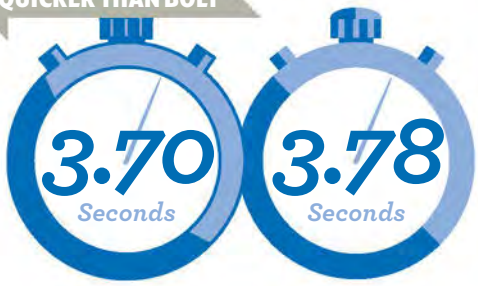
### BOOTIFUL

**£2,500**

Price of the Swarovski crystal-encrusted boots he wore in the warm-up before Saint-Etienne's game against Lyon in 2012

### HONOURS

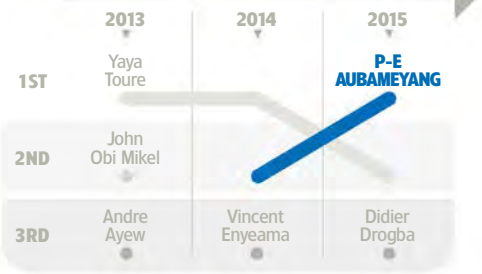
### QUICKER THAN BOLT

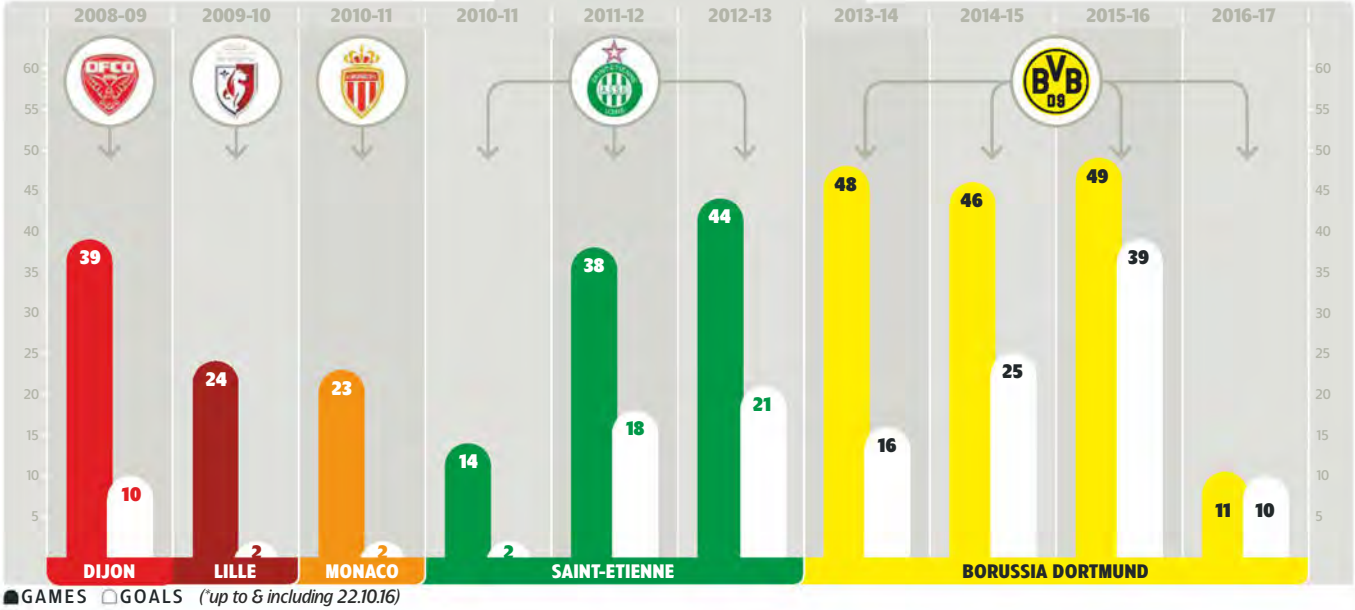



**PEA**'s time for 30m, set in 2013 at a Dortmund training camp

**USIAN BOLT**'s first 30m in a world record 100m run of 9.58sec in 2009

### CAF AFRICAN PLAYER OF THE YEAR




GAMES GOALS (*up to & including 22.10.16)

Glenn Moore

# Bergeroo departs ahead of Euros draw

## Olivier Echouafni takes charge of France

A major tournament is usually followed by coaching changes and player retirements, and Rio 2016 Olympics was no exception.

But while the managerial transition in Germany – from Silvia Neid, who bowed out after completing her collection of honours with Olympic gold, to Steffi Jones – was trailed long ago, the departure of France's Philippe Bergeroo was a brutally swift affair, with the coach fired and replaced within a day.

Bergeroo had three years at the helm, during which France often played attractive football only to run out of steam in matches and tournaments as honours continue to elude a team that has yet to reach a major Final. The under-19s may have won four European tournaments, but at senior level the team falter. Semi-finalists under Bruno Bini at the 2011 World Cup and 2012 Olympics, they fell at the quarter-finals in all three major tournaments under Bergeroo. He would likely have been fired anyway, but publicly criticising the players' mental strength after the Olympics sealed his exit, even if many feel he had a point.

His replacement, on a two-year deal, is Olivier Echouafni. The contract length reflects inevitable doubts about a man who has no experience of the women's game and whose main attraction appeared to be his availability. His management record extends to two brief spells in the men's game with Amiens and Sochaux – who sacked him after a poor start to the 2015-16 Ligue 2 season. The 44-year-old previously played for Marseille, Nice, Strasbourg and Rennes (where he played under Bergeroo).

The length of the contract is also odd given France's main focus is three years away when they host the 2019 World Cup. However, in less than 12 months they compete in the European Championship. What will the French federation do if *Les Bleus* perform poorly in Holland? Find another coach?

The scale of Echouafni's task will be made clear on November 8 when the draw for the finals is made in Rotterdam. Sixteen teams, including five debutant nations, will be represented in the Netherlands next summer.

In an indication of the growing strength of the women's game, this will be the first 16-team European finals; an expansion that has the benefit of facilitating the classic format of two nations qualifying from each of four groups followed by a knockout phase.

France are seeded, along with the hosts and defending champions (and new Olympic gold medalists) Germany and England. Olympic runners-up Sweden are in the second pot along with the best of the debutants, Switzerland, plus Norway and Spain. The other debutants are Scotland, Belgium, Austria and Portugal.

In the finals, which run from July 16 to August 6, Echouafni will have to do without the brilliant Louisa Cadamuro (nee Necib), who is giving up the professional game to start a family, and Sabrina Delannoy, who quit international football almost as soon as he was appointed.

Also retiring from international football are Germany's captain Saskia Bartusiak, though she will continue to play for Frankfurt, and US veteran Heather O'Reilly. Brazil midfielder Formiga, who belied her 38 years with a personally impressive Olympics, will also call it a day at the end of the year.

There have also been some notable transfers, with Scotland's Kim Little agreeing a return to Arsenal after three

**New boss...Olivier Echouafni (centre, front row)**

> Running from July 16 to August 6, this will be the first 16-team European finals

largely successful years with Seattle Reign, and Olympic gold medallist Anja Mittag leaving Paris Saint-Germain for Wolfsburg.

Such is the depth of talent at Wolfsburg, Mittag appeared only as a substitute in both legs of the German club's defeat of Chelsea in the UEFA Women's Champions League round of 32, in which Hungary's Zsanett Jakabfi scored a first-leg hat-trick at Stamford Bridge. The 4-1 aggregate scoreline was a repeat of that between the teams last season and raised a question as to how it is the FA WSL champions are unseeded when England are fourth in the women's club coefficient rankings? The answer is clubs are seeded primarily on their own past performances, and Chelsea are relatively new to the elite.

Making their European bow, the new English title-winners, Manchester City, did well to reach the last 16 with an impressive 6-0 aggregate win over former finalists Zvezda of Russia.

**Pressure...Philippe Bergeroo (centre) at the Olympics in Brazil**

**Quit...Sabrina Delannoy**

Unseeded City were rewarded with a decent draw against Brondby of Denmark. Elsewhere the big guns were all kept apart, partly due to seeding, partly due to luck. Holders Lyon face Zurich, last-year's runners-up Wolfsburg meet Eskilstuna United of Sweden, Bayern Munich were drawn with Russia's Rossiyanka, who qualified via an injury-time goal against SFK 2000 Sarajevo, and Rosengard play Slavia Prague. In addition PSG, who needed a Cristiane hat-trick to overcome a 3-1 first-leg deficit against Norway's LSK Kvinner, were paired with BIIK-Kazygurt, the first club from Kazakhstan to get this far. Spanish champions Athletic Bilbao went out to Denmark's Fortuna Hjorring, who now meet Brescia, but Barcelona survive and will face Twente.

**Impressive... Man City win in Russia**

On the domestic front, with the summer leagues drawing to a close, Linkopings secured the Swedish title, PK-35 Vantaa are champions of Finland and Rossiyanka regained the Russian championship.

# Flash grab first US title

A Final that showcased both the challenges and possibilities inherent in US women's soccer ended in gripping fashion in Houston, where a penalty shoot-out victory against Washington Spirit earned Western New York Flash their first National Women's Soccer League title.

Both the finale and the match preceding it made up in drama what was often lacking in quality. With regular-season winners Portland Thorns, a team packed with internationals, knocked out in the play-off semi-finals, both finalists were short on glamour. This often showed after a misleading opening with two goals in the opening 15 minutes. Then, when Crystal Dunn scored her second well-taken goal in extra-time, Spirit seemed set for a first title, but deep into injury-time Lynn Williams rose to head in an equaliser.

Williams, who scored twice in the semi-final despatch of Portland, was pipped to MVP honours by goalkeeper Sabrina D'Angelo. At fault for Dunn's opening goal, the 23-year-old Canadian saved three spot-kicks to secure the championship.

It was an unexpected achievement for Flash, who failed to make the play-offs last season and only appointed Paul Riley a couple of months before this campaign. Riley, an Englishman who left the Thorns last year after two near-misses, was not able to coach his players from the sidelines at the Final as he had been shown a red card for arguing with the officials in the semi-final, in Portland.

Flash are based near Buffalo but play their home matches 70 miles away in Rochester (both cities are in the north-west of New York state, near The Great Lakes). It says much for the state of flux in US women's football this last decade that this was their fourth title in seven seasons, all in different competitions.

Admittedly the first, in 2010, was in a developmental league, but the Flash then won the final campaign of the failed Women's Professional Soccer league, followed by the only season of the interim WPSL Elite.

Then NWSL began and Flash fielded US legends Abby Wambach and Carli Lloyd, but though they won the regular season the title eluded them. Their key player now is Abby Erceg, New Zealand captain, though Williams capped a fine season by being called into Jill Ellis' national squad along with Sam Mewis (who also scored in the Final) and Abby Dahlkemper.

The Final capped a thrilling play-off series with both semis going to extra-time. In the first, Spirit beat Chicago Red Stars 2-1 with a 111th-minute goal from Francisca Ordega settling a tie that earlier featured goals from US internationals Ali Krieger (for Spirit) and Christen Press. Washington actually play 20 miles north of the capital in comparatively rural Maryland and if the 4,249 attendance seems disappointing it was a season's best. It was dwarfed, however, by the 20,086 who packed into Providence Park to cheer on Thorns against Flash.

> NWSL is the third attempt at a women's league in the US, but the first to complete a fourth season

**Level...Flash's Lynn Williams heads home against Spirit**

**Champs ...Flash**

**Heroine...keeper Sabrina D'Angelo is mobbed after saving three penalties**

In a see-saw match, the home team rallied from 2-0 down to force extra-time, with veteran Christine Sinclair among the goals, only for Williams' brace to restore Flash's two-goal lead. Lindsey Horan pulled a goal back before the mini-break, but despite frantic attacking in the second period of extra-time Thorns were unable to level again. Thorns' 30-year-old Mark Parsons, another Englishman, was left with the consolation prize of Coach of the Year.

The most significant aspect of all, however, was the mere fact the season reached its scheduled conclusion. NWSL is the third attempt at developing a professional women's league in the US, but the first to complete a fourth season. The poor quality of the pitch in Houston and the low attendance (8,255) underlines there is still a long way to go, but finally there is a sense of permanence.

The league, which began with eight clubs, is now up to 10 with Orlando Pride proving a successful expansion team this year. The next destination, according to the strongest rumours, is Los Angeles though Atlanta is also a possibility.

# UNIQUE CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

# *from £14.99*

**SAVE £5**
when you buy 2 or more online

## Whoever's on your list, they're on ours too

Whether it's your golfing partner, fashion-following friend or the country-loving in-laws, a subscription is a gift that keeps delivering.

### Women, Fashion & Beauty

From fabulous high street fashion to celebrity style and beauty tips, we've got all the inspiration a woman needs.

12 issues **£29.99**
~~£59.20~~ **Save £29**

12 issues **£14.99**
~~£43.20~~ **Save £28**

12 issues **£14.99**
~~£44.00~~ **Save £29**

50 issues **£45.49**
~~£59.16~~ **Save £13**

### House & Home

Hot properties, cool kitchens, country gardens – if they've got a passion for all-things home, step inside.

12 issues **£26.99**
~~£49.00~~ **Save £22**

12 issues **£29.99**
~~£59.00~~ **Save £29**

12 issues **£29.99**
~~£57.00~~ **Save £27**

12 issues **£29.99**
~~£59.00~~ **Save £29**

### Sports & Hobbies

From golf to cycling and sailing to gardening. Whatever they're into, we're onto it.

13 issues **£40.49**
~~£63.82~~ **Save £23**

12 issues **£39.99**
~~£60.00~~ **Save £20**

13 issues **£41.49**
~~£62.59~~ **Save £21**

51 issues **£104.49**
~~£156.25~~ **Save £51**

### Country & Equestrian

Fuel their love of the great outdoors, with essential reads for hunting, eventing, fishing and countryside enthusiasts.

12 issues **£40.49**
~~£59.92~~ **Save £19**

51 issues **£125.49**
~~£170.00~~ **Save £44**

52 issues **£97.49**
~~£150.00~~ **Save £52**

12 issues **£34.49**
~~£48.00~~ **Save £13**

**TV and entertainment, fine wine, music, lifestyle, cookery… with over 50 titles, we've got it covered.**

Subscribe online at
**magazinesdirect.com/xmas40**

**0330 333 1113**
**Quote code: AZQ6**
7 days a week from 8am to 9pm (UK time)

**Complete the coupon below**

Complete this coupon and send to: **FREEPOST Time Inc (No further address needed. No stamp required – for UK only)**

**Your details**

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:
Surname:
Email:
Address:
Postcode:
Home Tel No: (inc.area code)
Mobile No.
Date of Birth: D D M M Y Y Y Y
Magazine title: £

**I would like to send a gift to:**

Please also fill out 'Your Details' opposite. To give more than one subscription, please supply address details on a separate sheet.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss: Forename:
Surname:
Address:
Postcode:
Magazine title: £

Total order amount: £

**Choose from 2 easy ways to pay:**

1. I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, for £_____
2. Please debit £_____ from my:
☐ Visa ☐ Visa Debit ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex

Card No:
Expiry Date: M M Y Y
Signature: Date:
(I am over 18)

**A Christmas card will be sent to all gift orders received by 9th December 2016 (either by email or post) so that you can send it on to the recipient before Christmas.** If you supply an email address your order will be acknowledged by email and you will be given the option to download a Christmas card or request one by post. If you do not supply an email address you will automatically be sent a postal Christmas card.

Offer open to new UK subscribers only. Final closing date for all orders is **2nd February 2017.** Orders purchased as a gift before the 9th December 2016 will start with the February 2017 issue published in January. All weekly titles will begin with the first available issue in January. All gift orders purchased after this date will begin with the first available issue. Orders purchased for yourself will start with the next available issue – please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery. The full subscription rate is for 1 year and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For enquiries and overseas rates contact help@magazinesdirect.com or call +44 (0) 330 333 4333. For full terms and conditions visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. We will process your data in accordance with our Privacy Policy (www.timeincuk.com/privacy). By providing your information, you agree to be contacted by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, publisher of the above magazines and other iconic media brands, with information about our goods and services and those of our carefully selected third parties. Please tick here if you do not wish to receive these messages: ☐ by email and/or SMS ☐ by post and/or telephone ☐ about carefully selected third party goods and services.

**AZQ6**

"I feel proud of every step I have taken. I have fulfilled all the objectives I set myself and I don't regret any of the decisions I made"

LUIS SUAREZ

# "The sacrifices I made as a kid helped me appreciate everything I have today"

The Uruguayan centre-forward was presented with his second ESM Golden Shoe at a ceremony in Barcelona

**You also won the Golden Shoe in 2014, before your move to Barcelona from Liverpool. How have you changed, as a player and a person, since then?**
Well, actually, I don't think I have changed. I continue with the same ambition of achieving important things in the world of football. I think that the titles you can get as a team really help you to achieve other personal titles, like this one.

**Ten years ago, you arrived in Holland from Uruguay. When you look back, what was the most important thing you learned there and is that the reason you have said that you want to return some day to Ajax?**
I have always said the Netherlands is where I learned the most. It is like a football school. It made me improve financially, technically and gave me more ambition. Of course, I would like to come back as a way to thank them, especially to Ajax, for making me a better and a well-known player around Europe.

**Have you been surprised by how your career has progressed since leaving South America, or did you always know you had it in you to become Europe's top goalscorer?**
I'm not surprised myself, it's just that I feel proud and satisfied with every stage I have had in my career – starting at Nacional in Uruguay, then going to a small team in Holland [Groningen], spending one year there, doing well and moving on to Ajax, then going to Liverpool, and now here in Barcelona, a club where every player would like to be. I feel proud of every step I have taken. I have fulfilled all the objectives I set myself and I don't regret any of the decisions I made.

Golden boy...Europe's top league goalscorer last season

**This is the second time that you have been Europe's top scorer. What was the hardest: to win the Golden Shoe when at Liverpool or with Barcelona?**
At the time, Liverpool weren't a team fighting to win the Premier League, and English football is very hard and competitive, so maybe then that has more merit. Here, it's also difficult, but the other players in the team really make it easier.

**What is your next challenge? Another Golden Shoe? A World Player title? The World Cup?**
A World Player title, that is more a question of marketing and media than personal achievements. With the Golden Shoe, there is no doubt that I have received it for my personal performance. Apart from that, it would be really nice to win another Champions League with Barcelona.

**As Lionel Messi is still playing, it would be difficult to win the World Player...**
Of course. I have the privilege of playing with the best footballer in the world and I hope I have the chance to tell my grandkids that I played with the best football player in the history of the game.

**Do Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo provide an**

**incentive for you to play better and score more goals?**
Not at all. I never compare myself to anyone. I have my personality, my own style to help the team. Awards like this are welcome because I play number nine. My team-mates help me a lot and I appreciate that.

**Last season, Messi and Ronaldo were not your biggest threat to winning the Golden Shoe. Instead, that came from Jonas of Benfica and Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain. Were you surprised by their performances?**
Not with Higuain, because everybody knows he is a great player and the figures confirmed his quality. With Jonas, yes, it was a bit surprising but he also is very talented and being in a competition like the Portuguese league helped him.

**And how do you assess the qualities of Bundesliga strikers Robert Lewandowski and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang?**
I think they are two different players. Lewandowski is a more physical player, with great technique and has proved it over the last five or six years by playing at a very high level. Aubameyang is very good technically, he is still growing and I am sure he will be among the greatest players of Europe in a few years.

"I think that the values I bring from the streets are to fight and never complain about the pain"

**You grew up on the streets and played football on the streets. Has that given you different values to players who grew up in academies, away from the difficulties of life?**
I think that the values I bring from the streets are to fight and never complain about the pain. I mean, I never ask to be subbed during a game unless I feel really bad or I actually cannot continue playing. People that know me know that. The sacrifices I have made since I was a child, not having money to buy football shoes, and making huge efforts to go training, have helped me to appreciate everything I have today.

Return...Suarez would like to play for Ajax again one day

Champions League... in the thick of it against Manchester City

**What would be your advice for kids who want to reach your level?**
Never lose the ambition and never change. Always be yourself and trust yourself even if you don't have that much quality. I haven't changed since I played in small teams and I still play with the same passion. When I arrived here, many people doubted whether I could adapt to this level and this way of playing, but I always trusted myself.

**Will the World Cup in Russia in 2018 be the most important tournament in your career?**
Yes, I hope so. First of all, we hope to qualify with Uruguay and I am very excited about playing with my national team. You always hope that Uruguay performs well, although we know it will be difficult to improve on what we did in South Africa.

**Turning to your club side, Barcelona, what do you think about Arda Turan? He didn't play for six months after signing but is now playing very well...**
Yes, for sure because the coach is using him in different positions: midfield, attack. I understand why he could not feel comfortable after six months without playing. It's difficult to understand

Interview...speaking to ESM members in Barcelona

the coach, your team-mates and until you start playing again you don't start playing well. He has had a great pre-season and he is helping the team a lot with his quality.

**Your team-mate Marc-Andre Ter Stegen has a risky style and concedes some crazy goals. Do you feel safe with him as Barca's keeper?**
The philosophy at FC Barcelona is to start playing from the goalkeeper to the striker. He is a great goalkeeper but he also can commit mistakes, and we know that mistakes in goalkeepers seem to be more serious. We have to continue supporting and helping him because he has quality both with his feet and hands, he's a great example to follow.

**Did you have any advice for Barcelona's most recent signing, Paco Alcacer?**
Paco is a player who wants to learn. He watches everything and wants to succeed. I think he will give very good things to the team.

**You played Manchester City in the Champions League. Can they win the Premier League?**
I think yes. [Our Champions League match] was a game between two of the candidates to win the Champions League; two teams with a similar way of playing. We were aware of some aspects of their game and were able take advantage. The expulsion of Claudio [Bravo] made us a little bit superior, but I think they are candidates to win the Premier League.

*Interview by Sid Lowe/ESM*

Impressive...Jonas scored 32 goals for Benfica last term

## ESM GOLDEN SHOE *2015-16*

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

| Pos | NAME | CLUB | Goals | Factor | Points |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LUIS SUAREZ | Barcelona | 40 | 2 | 80 |
| 2 | GONZALO HIGUAIN | Napoli | 36 | 2 | 72 |
| 3 | CRISTIANO RONALDO | Real Madrid | 35 | 2 | 70 |
| 4 | JONAS | Benfica | 32 | 2 | 64 |
| 5 | ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI | Bayern Munich | 30 | 2 | 60 |
| 6 | ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC | Paris Saint-Germain | 38 | 1.5 | 57 |
| 7 | ISLAM SLIMANI | Sporting | 27 | 2 | 54 |
| 8 | LIONEL MESSI | Barcelona | 26 | 2 | 52 |
| 9 | HARRY KANE | Tottenham Hotspur | 25 | 2 | 50 |
| 10 | PIERRE-EMERICK AUBAMEYANG | Borussia Dortmund | 25 | 2 | 50 |

# Europe's MOST WANTED coaches

We take a look at some of the men who are set to make a step up and take on the biggest jobs in the game

## EUSEBIO DI FRANCESCO
### Sassuolo

**Former Italy midfielder presiding over Serie A's success story**

Perhaps the best thing you can say about Eusebio Di Francesco is that there are football experts in Italy who compare him to current Chelsea coach Antonio Conte. This is not only because they are both 47 years old. Nor is it because, as players, they were both tough, battling and distinctly useful midfielders for Italy. The real reason is that Di Francesco's remarkable success with Sassuolo recalls the early years of Conte's career, when he guided clubs like Bari and Siena into Serie A.

And after leading Sassuolo to a first-ever top-flight promotion in the summer of 2013, Di Francesco has managed to keep them there. Better still, last season he led the club into Europe with a sixth-place finish.

A Europa League qualification with one of Italian football's big guns is one thing; to do it with a club that only arrived in Serie A three years ago is something else. What's more, Sassuolo's success has not been based on buying two or three big foreign names either. Of the current side, guys like Federico Peluso, Luca Antei, Pol Lirola, Lorenzo Pellegrini, Davide Biondini, Matteo Politano and Federico Ricci are hardly international household names.

On top of that, Sassuolo cannot even count on the fervour of local support when they line up for their home games at the Mapei Stadium in Reggio Emilia. The town of Sassuolo is just down the road from Modena, roughly halfway between Bologna and Reggio Emilia which means Sassuolo fans have to travel to another town for home games as the 4,000-capacity Ricci stadium in Sassuolo is obviously too small.

For most of Serie A fixtures, Sassuolo draw a crowd of 10,000 or less, while last season the club sold just 6,300 season tickets. It is only when Juventus turn up that Sassuolo fill the 21,000 arena.

Having achieved so much despite such drawbacks, it would seem only a matter of time before Di Francesco leaves for one of Serie A's big-hitters. Last spring, for example, there was huge speculation that he was on his way to Milan – until then-owner Silvio Berlusconi made it clear that "coaches like Conte and Di Francesco...are not the right names for the future of Milan".

That Di Francesco will follow Conte into the upper echelons of the game seems a given according to judges such

as Giancarlo Marocchi. The former Italy and Juventus midfielder says: "I think you could predict a great future for him, even if, just at the moment, there are no obvious jobs available at the top [Italian] clubs. However, he is an intelligent coach, a hard worker and someone who can dialogue easily with players and club directors alike.

"On top of that, I would say that he has learned a lot in Serie A, he is not rigid about playing a 4-3-3 system, he can switch to 4-2-3-1 without difficulty. Above all, he has learned to change tactics, not to ask his team to do things late in a game that they are too tired to do."

Various aspects of Di Francesco's coaching do indeed suggest he will continue to do well. Firstly, he had the intelligence to reshape his ideas after a disastrous start in Serie A saw the team pick up four successive defeats, including a 7-0 home drubbing from Internazionale.

Secondly, he has taken full advantage of a largely "Italian" squad which is solid, organised and determined. Thirdly, he has made the most of the few real talents that have come his way, such as Simone Zaza and his current ace striker Domenico Berardi. Finally, throughout all of his Serie A days, Sassuolo have continued to play positive football, never settling for the ultra-defensive, 10 men-behind-the-ball game sometimes used by the minnows of Italian football.

> "He is an intelligent coach, a hard worker and someone who can dialogue easily with players and club directors alike"
>
> **Former Italy international Giancarlo Marocchi**

Di Francesco does have a very important ally at Sassuolo: club owner Giorgio Squinzi. The millionaire may not have signed any big international names but he did allow his coach to bring in experienced defenders Paolo Cannavaro and Francesco Acerbi for the first Serie A campaign, and he recently bought out Juventus' share in Berardi.

After leading Sassuolo to Serie A promotion, Di Francesco indicated a step by step approach to his career, saying: "Sure I am ambitious and I want to grow and improve, but first of all I have got to do well in a place where there is the chance to work in peace."

Sassuolo has been that place. But has the time now come to move on?

*Paddy Agnew*

# PASCAL DUPRAZ
## Toulouse

**Passionate ex-Evian boss taking Toulouse in the right direction**

Miracles have become a way of life for the charismatic Toulouse boss, who just a few months ago pulled the side back from the Ligue 1 relegation brink and, on the back of victories over Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco, are now challenging for a top-four spot.

When Dupraz took over TFC in March, following the resignation of Dominique Arribage, the club were 10 points shy of safety with only 10 games to play.

But against all the odds, the former Brest and Mulhouse left-winger swiftly rebuilt morale, adding defensive resolve to a group of technicians who had forgotten how to fight, and eventually securing survival with a come-from-behind 3-2 win at Angers on the last day of the season.

Events before and during the do-or-die clash with Angers cemented Dupraz's reputation as both a formidable leader of men and intuitive game-changer.

His emotionally charged pre-match address to his team – filmed by the cameras of Canal Plus TV and now a viral phenomenon – was a rallying call worthy of Al Pacino in *Any Given Sunday*: "It's now you have to do it. Not tomorrow. Not yesterday. Now. All you have to do is eat. The table's laid."

He had another motivational trick up his sleeve too, with a set of video messages from the players' family members. A nearest-and-dearest call to arms that left many of the squad in tears. And it would work a treat.

Good coaches invariably make the right decisions at key moments and Dupraz certainly did so when looking down the barrel against Angers. With his side 2-1 down, and only half-an-hour left to turn the tide, a touchline microphone picked him up telling his assistant Mickael Debeve: "I don't know why, but I'm thinking about Bodiger and his left foot." He duly brought on midfielder Yann Bodiger and some 15 minutes later the substitute curled in the free-kick winner.

"My players were heroic tonight," declared Dupraz, who three days into his reign at Toulouse was hospitalised with a minor heart scare. "For two-and-a-half months, I've been telling them that this exploit was possible. Ours is a victory for remarkable players, but also remarkable men. We don't owe anything to anybody. No one thought we were going to survive apart from us."

Ecstatic...Pascal Dupraz celebrates with Toulouse defender Issiaga Sylla after September's victory over Paris Saint-Germain

On the up... after beating PSG

The term "Mission Impossible" means nothing to an eternal optimist like Dupraz, who twice kept Evian up in his previous coaching job despite financial restraints.

A straight-talker, the 54-year-old Dupraz represents the gift which never stops giving for journalists and broadcasters. One minute he is declaring that even Pep Guardiola would have problems working in the lower reaches of Ligue 1; the next, turning on French international turned pundit Christophe Dugarry who, on seeing Dupraz and his team do a lap of honour following a 2-0 win against PSG in September, thought the TFC coach was too concerned with showing off to the gallery.

"At what point did Dugarry learn the subtleties of being a coach," stormed Dupraz. "In what era? Which century? I hear he said I should be ashamed for taking part in a lap of honour. He should take care of his family. Not me. We did a lap of honour because we wanted to pay our respects to our fans."

While some might not appreciate Dupraz's omnipresence in the media, the Toulouse faithful cannot get enough of it.

*Nick Bidwell*

# PETER STOGER

## Cologne

**Resourceful ex-Austria international leading his side up the Bundesliga**

Low-key but high-achieving, Peter Stoger is proving to be a master team-builder; a man for round pegs in round holes and basic common sense.

Since leading Cologne to the German second-tier title in 2014 in his inaugural campaign at the RheinEnergieStadion, his side have slowly grown in assurance and effectiveness. They finished 12th on their return to the Bundesliga, ninth last term and now arbour dreams of Europe.

At a club infamous for its impatience and knee-jerk reactions – Stoger is their 19th coach in only 18 years – the former Austria midfielder and Austria Vienna boss is providing just what they need right now: stability, shrewd man-management and solid work on the training ground.

Proof positive of his team's new-found competitiveness was the way in which they refused to buckle in a 1-1 draw at Bayern Munich in October. One-nil down at the break, Stoger's side had not offered much at all. But thanks to his decision to switch from a 5-3-2 system to a 4-4-2, the second-half was a different story. Far more active, Cologne hauled themselves back into the game, picking up a point with an athletic finish from in-form French striker Tony Modeste.

Too many visitors to Bayern's Allianz-Arena give up the ghost before kick-off, accepting defeat as inevitable, but not Stoger and company. Flexible, disciplined and above all courageous, the *Kolner* are a tough nut to crack these days. What catches the eye is the ease with which they alter formation according to the lay of the land. In a 2-1 win against Ingolstadt, Stoger rang the tactical changes time and again, constantly shuffling between a 4-4-2, 3-5-2 and 4-4-1-1.

While his team has an abundance of individual talent in Modeste, German international left-back Jonas Hector, keeper Timo Horn and Japanese second striker Yuya Osako, the most cherished chapter in the Stoger operating manual is the common good – a theme which underscores everything his combative and close-knit group does.

"Our security blanket is our togetherness," says midfielder Marco Hoger. "If we stick together, close ranks, we can make life difficult for any opponent."

The 50-year-old Stoger is particularly adept at making the most of what's at his disposal. When the club failed this summer to sign Hanover central defender Salif Sane, the coach did not bat an eyelid. And he was equally sanguine after defensive organiser Dominic Maroh broke two ribs on the opening day of the season, declaring: "We'll find an internal solution."

Cologne's finance director Alexander Wehrle claims the club's current success has much to do with Stoger's ability to turn good players into better ones. But that's only half of the equation. With a keen eye for detail, he's always looking for that extra edge and it's no coincidence that his side have made strides in so many different areas this term. Stronger when defending corners, better in their levels of concentration and far more clinical in front of goal, going from rock bottom in the Bundesliga chance-conversion standings last season to a place in the top-three.

> "It always used to be said that this club was a difficult environment, but I've not found it to be the case"

"It always used to be said that this club was a difficult environment, but I've not found it to be the case," says Stoger.

"I could put my ideas into practice here. We know where we intend to go.

"If Augsburg, Mainz and Freiburg can play in the Europa League, so can we."

*Nick Bidwell*

# DAVID WAGNER

## Huddersfield Town

**Klopp associate setting the pace in the English Championship**

It is 44 years since Huddersfield were last in England's top flight and their push for a return is being masterminded by a German-American who is a close friend of Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp.

In charge at the John Smith's Stadium for a little more than a year, the former coach of Borussia Dortmund's under-23 side – where he worked alongside Klopp – Wagner is Huddersfield's first-ever foreign boss and he is blazing quite a trail.

After successfully keeping his new club out of the second-tier relegation zone last term – finishing 19th out of 24 clubs, a good 11 points above the drop zone – the 45-year-old has seen the West Yorkshire side win eight of their opening 11 games in their best start to a season since 1952.

> "Jurgen looks to me for Championship feedback. He reciprocates by telling me about one or two talented Liverpool youngsters"
>
> **On his friendship with Jurgen Klopp**

Despite recruiting no fewer than 13 new players this summer, he quickly blended them into a functioning whole, while instigating Klopp's high-octane pressing game with rapid transitions

Wagner and Klopp go back a long way. In the 1990s, both played for Mainz, sharing a room and duly becoming good friends. Klopp is the godfather of one of Wagner's two daughters, while Wagner was the best man at Klopp's wedding.

Although the pair are now in close proximity in the north of England, work commitments prevent them meeting on a regular basis. So they have to make do with frequent phone calls. "Jurgen looks to me for Championship feedback," Wagner told Spox.com earlier this year. "He reciprocates by telling me about one or two talented Liverpool youngsters."

The son of a German mother and American father, Wagner is Deutschland born and bred, but after representing junior German sides he opted to play for the USA and won eight caps.

When his playing career ended, he graduated in Biology and Sport from Darmstadt University and subsequently had a spell as a student teacher at a high school in his home town of Gernsheim in the Hesse region of western Germany.

From classroom tutor to sporting guiding light.

*Nick Bidwell*

# JORGE SIMAO

## Chaves

**Making waves in Portugal with newly promoted side from the North-east**

The picturesque and mountainous Tras-os-Montes region – which, as the translation of its name, "beyond the mountains", suggests – has the feel of being cut off from the rest of the country. It is here, a few miles from the border with Spain, that the country's most northern top-flight team is to be found.

Unlike many places in Portugal, when Benfica, Porto or Sporting roll into town, the visiting fans do not outnumber the locals, who are fiercely proud of their football team, and around half the town's population of 20,000 have been filling the Estadio Municipal Engenheiro Manuel Branco Teixeira to capacity this season.

The healthy attendances can be explained by the end of a 17-year hiatus outside of the top division and the flying start the team has made since returning to the big time.

Founded in 1949, Chaves enjoyed their most successful period from the mid-1980s into the 90s as a mainstay of the Primeira Liga, making it to Europe in 1987 and beating Romanian outfit Universitatea Craiova in the first round of the UEFA Cup.

However, the new millennium signalled a decline that saw Chaves tumble into the semi-pro leagues. In 2011, the club was close to being declared bankrupt – until local businessman Francisco Carvalho stepped in to save the day. With his son, Bruno Carvalho, as president, the family focused on a range of initiatives to build up the local fan base, which included improving stadium facilities, holding open-training sessions and organising masses in the Parish Church in honour of the club's defunct founders, directors and members.

Keen... Chaves' Perdigao (left)

Whether by divine intervention or through sheer hard work, things improved and the club worked its way back up to the second tier. Vitor Oliveira was then hired as last season they returned to the top flight – the ninth time Oliveira had led a club to the Primeira Liga. However, as is his wont, he decided not to stick for a potentially arduous campaign battling to keep Chaves up. By the end of May, Jorge Simao was announced as the club's new boss on a two-year contract.

> "The only good result is a win. There is no other way to think"

Attracting Simao was something of a coup. The 40-year-old had excelled in his two previous top-flight jobs, guiding Belenenses into Europe in 2014-15 and only failing to repeat European qualification with Pacos de Ferreira by a point as he led the modest outfit to an excellent seventh-place finish.

Pacos were loathe to lose him, but the challenge offered by Chaves proved to Simao's liking. After five weekends of the season, his well-organised and well-balanced team were one of only two unbeaten sides in the league. Then, in round six, they prepared to welcome the other one – reigning champions Benfica.

Asked whether he would be happy with a draw, Simao showed the confidence he had in his squad by responding: "The only good result is a win. There is no other way to think. If I was offered a point before the game I wouldn't take it." In the event Benfica ran out 2-0 victors, but the scoreline does not tell the full story of a match in which Chaves could easily have earned at least a draw.

With such a positive vibe coursing throughout the club and its supporters, and a competitive team led by an intelligent, ambitious coach, there's every chance Simao and the Chaves fans will continue to enjoy that winning feeling.

*Tom Kundert*

# JORGE SAMPAOLI

## Sevilla

**Former Chile boss making an impression in La Liga**

It was the end of an era at Sevilla this summer when, having overseen the club's third successive Europa League triumph, Unai Emery left to replace Laurent Blanc at Paris Saint-Germain.

Several key players also departed, as captain Jose Reyes joined Espanyol, Polish midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak followed Emery to Paris and striker Kevin Gameiro went to Atletico Madrid.

In their place came several new faces: Luciano Vietto and Matias Kranevitter on loan from Atletico Madrid, midfielder Pablo Sarabia from Getafe, striker Wissam Ben Yedder from Toulouse and Samir Nasri from Manchester City. In total, there were 14 player departures, with 13 arrivals.

But the biggest change was on the bench, where Jorge Sampaoli took over from Emery.

For the 56 year-old Argentinian, it was a first posting in Europe after a coaching career spent mostly in Chile, where he quit the national side in January 2016, six months after winning the Copa America.

En route to Chile's first continental title, Sampaoli's side took a more pragmatic approach than that of his mentor, Marcelo Bielsa, but the former apprentice was keen to try his luck in Europe with a more attack-minded approach.

Discussions were held with Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, who eventually opted for Antonio Conte, but Sevilla and Sampaoli always seemed a more logical fit.

He is assisted by Juanma Lillo, the former Salamanca coach cited by Pep Guardiola as an important influence, and several key players have accepted new roles. Nasri has been a revelation in a central position, while midfielder Vitolo, having rejected a move to Atletico, has adapted to a more disciplined role.

It has not all been plain sailing, but October's victory over Leganes was Sevilla's first away win for 511 days and ended a miserable run of league form. A 1-0 victory at home to Atletico briefly took the team top of La Liga and ensured that Sampaoli has overseen their best-ever start to a season.

It remains to be seen whether his ambitious, high-octane pressing game can be sustained over the course of a whole season, but Sevilla certainly look the team best placed from the chasing pack to challenge La Liga's big three.

*John Holmesdale*

# Managers index

Our latest rankings of Europe's the most in-demand or available coaches

## 1 Diego SIMEONE

**Age:** 46.
**Nationality:** Argentinian.
**Current status:** Enjoying great success with Atletico Madrid.
**Style:** Brilliant organiser and motivator.
**Past:** Won titles with Estudiantes and River Plate in Argentina.
**Future:** Recently altered his contract with Atletico so that it will end in 2018 rather than 2020.

## 2 Thomas TUCHEL

**Age:** 43.
**Nationality:** German.
**Current status:** Is earning praise from all quarters for the performances or his youthful Borussia Dortmund side.
**Style:** A keen and innovative student of the game.
**Past:** Followed in Jurgen Klopp's footsteps at Mainz.
**Future:** Likely to be linked with jobs at one of Europe's big clubs.

## 3 Andre VILLAS-BOAS

**Age:** 39.
**Nationality:** Portuguese.
**Current status:** Unemployed after leaving Zenit in the summer.
**Style:** Fine technician but criticised in Russia for Zenit's pragmatic approach.
**Past:** Hailed as the "new Mourinho" after success with Porto. Later struggled at Chelsea and Tottenham, but won the Russian title with Zenit.
**Future:** Linked with Bundesliga vacancies.

## 4 Ralf RANGNICK

**Age:** 58.
**Nationality:** German.
**Current status:** Sporting director at Bundesliga new boys RB Leipzig.
**Style:** Favours high pressing and a short-passing game.
**Past:** Took Hoffenheim from the third tier to the Bundesliga before move to Schalke.
**Future:** FA technical director Dan Ashworth is a fan, so he may again be linked with the England job.

## 5 Roberto MANCINI

**Age:** 51.
**Nationality:** Italian.
**Current status:** Unemployed after leaving Inter.
**Style:** Tactical discipline.
**Past:** Won the Premier League with Man City.
**Future:** Available.

## 6 Marcelo BIELSA

**Age:** 61.
**Nationality:** Argentinian.
**Current status:** Left Lazio after two days in July.
**Style:** Brilliant, often chaotic.
**Past:** Argentina and Chile.
**Future:** Uncertain.

## 7 Pascal DUPRAZ

**Age:** 54.
**Nationality:** French.
**Current status:** Toulouse coach.
**Style:** Straight-talking motivator.
**Past:** Lower divisions with Evian.
**Future:** Money to spend is appealing.

## 8 Paco JEMEZ

**Age:** 46.
**Nationality:** Spanish.
**Current status:** Unemployed after leaving Granada.
**Style:** Attack-minded approach.
**Past:** Four seasons at Rayo Vallecano.
**Future:** La Liga job.

## 9 MARCELINO

**Age:** 51.
**Nationality:** Spanish.
**Current status:** Quit Villarreal in pre-season.
**Style:** Counter-attacking game.
**Past:** Top-four finish last season.
**Future:** In La Liga.

## 10 Laurent BLANC

**Age:** 50.
**Nationality:** French.
**Current status:** Unemployed.
**Style:** Likes to promote youth.
**Past:** Hat-trick of titles with PSG.
**Future:** Linked with Inter.

11 Eusebio DI FRANCESCO
Sassuolo

12 Guus HIDDINK
Unemployed
(Ex-Holland)

13 Marco SILVA
Unemployed
(Ex-Olympiakos)

14 Santiago SOLARI
Real Madrid Castilla

15 Thomas SCHAAF
Unemployed
(Ex-Bremen)

16 Andre BREITENREITER
Unemployed
(Ex-Schalke)

17 Bruno LABBADIA
Unemployed
(Ex-Hamburg)

18 Sergio CONCEICAO
Unemployed
(Ex-Guimaraes)

19 Sam ALLARDYCE
Unemployed
(Ex-England)

20 Manuel PELLEGRINI
Unemployed
(Ex-Man City)

Key: Experienced · Successful · Volatile · Young · Long-term strategist · Tactician · Former player · Available · Motivator

Tragedy...the funeral of an Atletico Nacional fan who was stabbed by rival supporters

WORDS: Carl Worswick

# Colombia's finest

## Next stop for the champions of Colombia and now South America is the Club World Cup

For now, at least, the debate is dead. Atletico Nacional's triumph in the 2016 Libertadores Cup shuts the lid on a dispute that has burned for decades between the new kings of South America and rival clubs Millonarios and America de Cali.

All three sides have long made vociferous claims to be Colombia's biggest and most successful club, but Nacional's record 15th league title last year, and the lifting of a second Libertadores in July, buries any lingering doubts. For the time being, the crown rests firmly in Medellin.

This has never been just a petty bar-room squabble between supporters for boasting rights. Nor has it been solely about football.

From the advent of professional football in Colombia, the country's number one sport has been entangled with politics, drug lords, war, power, money and regional identity. And as the country's three biggest clubs, so America, Millonarios and Nacional became the most potent recipients for these wild, unruly and often dangerous forces.

Hailing from capital city Bogota, Millonarios were early trailblazers. Supported by the country's powerful Conservative Party and financed by wealthy and influential businessmen, they stole an early march on their rivals.

It was an era drenched in blood, and from the belly of this violent beast

emerged the country's first professional league. The death of left-leaning presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitan had unleashed a ferocious war that cost at least 250,000 lives. The thirst for blood was unquenchable – and football was the government's antidote.

Millonarios' early dominance was forged on the back of an illegal player raid that started in Argentina and spread across South America to Europe. *Millos* brought the stars to the circus, and for the first time in the country's history the masses were seduced by football's beauty. The *Ballet Azul* stormed to four titles in five years, but the climax of their early dominance was undoubtedly an Alfredo Di Stefano-inspired 4-2 friendly win against Real Madrid in 1952. For a brief moment, perhaps, Millonarios were the best team in the world.

For the next 20 years, Colombia slumped into the backwaters of world football. The money dried up, the stars disappeared and mediocrity swept the league. But by the 1970s a new source of dirty income had flooded the country and polluted the veins of Colombian football.

America – from Colombia's third city, Cali – suddenly awoke from mid-table obscurity after the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers took control of the club that had a supposed curse hanging round its neck. On the back of a public exorcism led by a priest, America won their first title in 1979. Within a few years, *La Mechita* would be one of the biggest clubs on the continent.

> America's success was born from a cocaine boom that would wreak untold misery on the country

Photo: Offside/Marca

**Real meeting...Alfredo Di Stefano (dark kit)**

However, their five straight domestic titles and three consecutive appearances in the Libertadores Cup Final were not achieved through a "simple and rigorous reorganisation of the club" as former player Alex Escobar once said. It was born from a cocaine boom that would wreak untold misery on the country for the next few decades. Refs were bribed, kidnapped and, in 1989, even killed. Matches were fixed, players lived in fear, and the egos of some of the world's most dangerous and powerful criminals ran out of control.

Meanwhile, Millonarios had fallen under the watch of Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, a pig farmer turned billionaire as number two of the powerful Medellin drug cartel. Their glory days would again flicker as he ensured back-to-back title wins in 1987 and 1988.

But if America were the plucky upstarts and the old guard of Millonarios represented history and tradition, Atletico Nacional came along a different path: that of football pioneers.

Before the 1970s, the Medellin side had won just one title and were a mid-table outfit. But in 1976, they appointed a coach who would change the fortunes of

**Success...Atletico Nacional celebrate winning the Libertadores Cup at their Atanasio Girardot Stadium**

not just *Los Verdolagas* but also shake Colombian football from its slumbers.

Osvaldo Zubeldia had won the Libertadores Cup three times for unfancied Argentinian side Estudiantes de la Plata at the tail end of the 1960s and also beat Manchester United in the 1968 Club World Cup Final. It was a team without stars that combined radical training and tactical innovations with a win-at-all-costs attitude.

Zubeldia's reputation took a battering in the years to come as his "anti-futbol" style irked football purists in Argentina. But Nacional president Hernan Botero Moreno remained suitably impressed and offered a sizeable sum to tempt the coach into a new project.

"Osvaldo was doing things that nobody had ever attempted before in Colombia," explains ex-Colombia coach Francisco Maturana. "He taught us to eat properly, train better and become professionals. He taught us the importance of strategy."

This shift in style earned Nacional widespread respect and they won the league in 1976 and 1981. "He was the best thing that happened to me as a player and later as a manager," former international Pedro Sarmiento told *AS* last year. "He was the pillar of our generation."

Zubeldia would die a few months after Nacional's 1981 title win but his legacy lived on. Throughout the 1980s, a new generation of coaches rooted in his discipline came through and had a radical impact in shaping the nation's football.

The most famous and successful of these was Maturana, who was originally a dentist from Colombia's poorest region, Choco. He had played as a central defender under Zubeldia at Nacional in the 1970s and was also influenced by Rinus Michels and the great Holland side of the 1970s via Uruguayan coach Ricardo De Leon, who had studied in Holland. Combining this doctrines, Maturana also crucially added a Colombian flavour.

After one season in his first job, at Once Caldas, Maturana was appointed coach of Nacional. A few months later he also took control of the national team.

Just as Ajax had been the basis of Michels' Holland, so Maturana forged a similar symbiotic relationship between Nacional and Colombia. And it didn't take long for results to show.

In his first international tournament, Colombia finished third at the 1987 Copa America and then went on to end a 28-year absence by qualifying for the 1990 World Cup. In his dual role, he also turned Nacional into the first Colombian team to win the Libertadores, beating Olimpia of Paraguay in a penalty shoot-out in 1989.

Maturana had given Colombia an identity by playing attractive football that left fans enchanted. Yet for many outside Colombia, Nacional's era of glory is remembered through the prism of Pablo Escobar, the most notorious and ruthless of all the country's football drug dons.

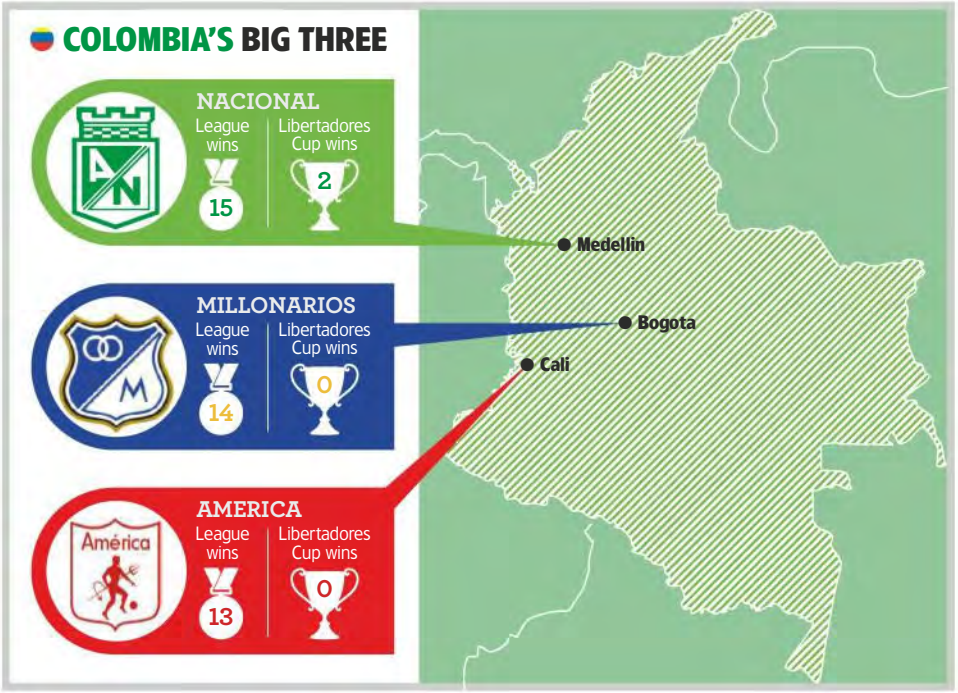
As early as 1981 the alarm bells had been ringing. During that year's Medellin *clasico* against Independiente, Nacional president Botero was caught on camera ripping a fistful of dollars from his pocket and waving it at the referee. Four years later, he was the first Colombian to be extradited to the USA on drug and money laundering charges. The league organisers responded by cancelling games in protest.

Botero's departure hit Nacional hard and the club lurched into bankruptcy under Botero's successor, Hernan Mesa. But then everything would change.

No document has ever proved Escobar's involvement with Nacional. Indeed, he was actually a fan of local rivals Independiente and was buried in a coffin wrapped with their flag. But throughout the 1980s and until his death in 1993, few now doubt the towering influence he exerted.

**Critical...the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan unleashed a ferocious war**

**Pupil...Francisco Maturana was coach of Colombia at the 1993 Copa America**



With Colombia's three big clubs under cartel control, the rivalry began to boil – until 1989, when it exploded.

Escobar launched a war against the state over the government's decision to extradite drug traffickers to the US. As newspaper buildings and aeroplanes lay bombed, and presidential candidates were murdered, Medellin turned into the world's most dangerous city. And into this fire, the quarter-finals of the Libertadores Cup pitted Millonarios against Nacional.

After winning the first leg 1-0 in Medellin, the return tie in Bogota was described by some as the most volatile game ever between two Colombian sides as the referee lost control and the match finished with Millonarios players swarming around the official, livid at his decisions. "That night, people in the stands were carrying guns, there were weapons everywhere," writes Fernando Araujo Velez in his book *No Era Futbol, Era Fraude* (It Wasn't Football, It was Fraud). "I've no idea how it didn't end in tragedy."

Millonarios would shrink back into the shadows as years of financial mismanagement and government drug controls almost bankrupted the club, while America were placed on a US drug blacklist and then relegated in 2011. Five years later they are still in the second tier, playing to empty stadiums.

However, Nacional suffered nothing like the same consequences and their boom years would again return.

Nowadays nobody really likes talking about the narco-football era of the 1980s, as players believe it degrades their achievements and football's bigwigs feel embarrassed by the past. "Why is the foreign media obsessed with that period?" asks the league's press officer. "We now have the cleanest league in the world. Why don't you instead focus on that?"

Yet those bold claims clearly smack of hyperbole. Even in 2016, one of the league's leading clubs, Envigado, remain on the same drug black list that led to America's collapse. The club isn't allowed to have a bank account, their shirt carries no sponsor and players are often paid out of a rucksack in the club car park.

Backing...Atletico Nacional fans

> "I had to meet dangerous criminals and never knew if I'd come out alive"
>
> Players' union boss Carlos Gonzalez Puche

Notorious... Pablo Escobar

Colombian football has undoubtedly changed, however, and one of the unsung heroes in this transformation has been players' union boss Carlos Gonzalez Puche.

An ex-footballer from a middle-class background, Puche had to hang up his boots early due to a "club cartel that blacklisted players fighting for their rights". He turned to law and wrote a defining thesis on labour rights and how Colombian players were treated no better than slaves. Not surprisingly, he quickly ran into trouble.

"I've had to meet with some of the most dangerous criminals in this country and I never knew if I'd come out of them alive," admits Puche. "I've received more death threats than I can remember."

But somehow he survived, and in 2004 set up Acolfutpro to represent players who had fallen in dispute with egregious club owners. In partnership with FIFpro, and backed by high-profile players such as ex-Colombia captain Mario Yepes and Internazionale defender Ivan Cordoba, his struggle pulled Colombian football from the darkness of the criminal underworld and helped to shape a fairer and more professional relationship.

"I've always tried to argue that if players were treated well and their rights were respected, then clubs would ▸

## THE POWER CURVE

### The key figures at Atletico Nacional

**JUAN CARLOS DE LA CUESTA**
Became the club's youngest president in history when he was appointed in 2010 at the age of 36. He is the financial brain that has steered Nacional through their most successful period.

**VICTOR MARULANDA**
A former player and ex president, the club's sports director has spent 28 years with Nacional and is now responsible for all transfer activity. Scored an own goal in Nacional's 1995 Libertadores Cup Final loss to Gremio.

**CARLOS ARDILA LULLE**
One of Colombia's richest men, his business empire took control of Nacional in 1996. The club owner's fizzy pop company, Postobon, sponsored the Colombian league until 2014.

**REINALDO RUEDA**
Coach who brought the Libertadores Cup back to Medellin for the first time since 1989. Previously had successful spells with Honduras, Ecuador and Colombia's under-20 side.

**BERNARDO REDIN**
Rueda's assistant joined Nacional in the summer and often stands in as coach for league games due to a schedule that could see Nacional play 85 games in 2016.

## COLOMBIA'S G8

Success for Atletico Nacional and Santa Fe in the Libertadores and Sudamericana Cups, handed Colombia a clean sweep of South America's two major titles for the first time in the continent's history.

With three of the quarter-finalists in this year's Sudamericana Cup also from Colombia, and the national team having just celebrated four years in the top 10 of the FIFA world rankings, the country's reputation as a continental heavyweight has perhaps never been stronger.

Yet on the domestic front a storm is brewing and not all is well.

Over recent months, a rebel group of eight club presidents have been holding meetings behind closed doors to discuss a strategy aimed at squeezing extra power and cash from their deal with league organisers DIMAYOR.

At the heart of the "G8" club demands is a shake-up in how TV money is distributed among the country's 36 professional teams.

Unlike the English Premier League, where the TV pot is divided roughly equally, or La Liga's former model of privately negotiating deals between individual clubs, Colombia has opted for a far more unorthodox and controversial basis upon which to slice the pie.

Currently, the Colombian league has a 20-team top flight and a second tier made up of 16 clubs. Yet broadcasting income is not divided along divisional lines. Instead, it is based on a club's "historical importance".

Under DIMAYOR's definition, clubs are split into two categories: a top-rung of 24 historical or Category A teams that each take an equal share of 90 per cent of TV income, and 12 minor clubs who divide the remaining 10 per cent. However, league titles, cup wins, fan base and TV audience do not count towards being a historical team. Rather, DIMAYOR's criteria only requires a club to have served three consecutive years in the top flight at any point in the league's 68-year history.

In essence it hands a team such as Union Magdalena, who haven't been in the top flight for 10 years, the same TV money as South American champions Atletico Nacional.

Champions...Santa Fe (in red) and Nacional

Unsurprisingly, the big boys are upset and are demanding DIMAYOR disclose the total amount they actually receive in TV revenue.

"We want to look at the signed contracts because it seems to us that this money isn't being shared fairly," says Deportivo Cali president Alvaro Martinez. "In Peru and Chile, economies that are pretty similar to ours, their biggest teams get four or five times more than what we receive."

As group spokesman, Martinez is the only one authorised to speak on behalf of the G8. But off the record, other presidents haven't been so tight-lipped, with one telling newspaper *El Tiempo*: "We either organise ourselves better or we'll have to set up a new league with another sponsor. We won't have any problems finding this [sponsor] or a broadcaster for the games; the league can't survive without the big teams."

In September, DIMAYOR held an extraordinary assembly. The G8 lost a vote that saw the old order retained.

"I've no idea what is now going to happen to the G8," DIMAYOR president Perdomo said afterwards. "At the end of the assembly I saw some very unhappy faces from the presidents of this group."

The majority have spoken, but those unhappy faces aren't set to go away.

*Carl Worswick*

### THE EIGHT CLUBS

- Atletico Nacional
- Millonarios
- America de Cali
- Deportivo Independiente Medellin
- Deportivo Cali
- Junior
- Deportes Tolima
- Once Caldas

(Santa Fe are not included because the club's president, Cesar Pastrana, has aspirations to be the next DIMAYOR president)

## STADIUM

**Estadio Atanasio Girardot (capacity 44,739)**

Named after a revolutionary leader who fought alongside Simon Bolivar in the Colombian war of independence, the Atanasio Giradot is home to both Atletico Nacional and city rivals Deportivo Independiente Medellin.

The third-biggest stadium in Colombia, it is the only ground to generate solar energy – from 40 panels that are installed on the roof of the western stand.

Now part of a broader complex that caters for 37 different sports, the Atanasio Girardot also occasionally hosts the national team's home games.

Nacional's future may, however, lie elsewhere with president De La Cuesta warning that the club's long-term goal is to build their own stadium.

Challenge...Nacional's Farid Diaz battles with Cristian Espinosa of Argentina's Huracan in the Libertadores Cup

benefit," says Puche. "In the last few years we have achieved a lot."

Helping Puche in his struggle was a law introduced by the government in 2011 that followed a period of crisis in the sport which had seen many clubs on the verge of bankruptcy. The collapse of the drug cartels, the ensuing fight for control by rival directors, and financial mismanagement had left football in ruins. Small clubs with few fans were able to win the league, but on the continental stage Colombia struggled to compete.

The new law sought to "organise football" and convert teams into PLCs in order to make football more transparent. The league accused the government of messing in its business and many articles of the bill were clumsily implemented or selectively ignored. However, the law helped turn football into a business, and Atletico Nacional in particular flourished under the financial backing of one of the world's wealthiest men, Carlos Ardila Lulle.

Nacional's owners, the Organizacion Ardila Lulle, include more than 80 businesses that stretch from fizzy-pop manufacturers and sugar refineries to the country's biggest TV companies and radio stations. In 1996, the Lulle business empire took control of Nacional.

Tribute...a plaque in honour of Andres Escobar at Antanasio Girardot Stadium

Results were initially disappointing despite huge injections of cash, but in 2010 Nacional finally turned a profit – and ever since their success has been quite spectacular.

First under Juan Carlos Osorio, who is now in charge of Mexico, and then current boss Reinaldo Rueda, over the last few years Nacional have won five league titles, two domestic cups and finally the Libertadores. "I've become obsessed with the Copa Libertadores," Osorio said in 2014. "I lie in bed at night thinking about it."

Rueda was able to achieve Osorio's dream largely because of the continuity and long-term vision that the Nacional project offers. "It's a planned and organised club that is held together by different processes," says Nacional president Juan Carlos de la Cuesta.

It's a structure that rivals Millonarios and America have lacked for decades. Indeed, six months before the club's

Boss...Juan Carlos Osorio led Nacional to the 2013 clausura title

Libertadores triumph, victory in last year's clausura championship also edged Nacional ahead of Millonarios in the title race for the first time. *Millos'* humiliation and fall from grace was epitomized in one photo: that of the team bus with a big blob of blue paint splattered over their former slogan "We're the team with the most Colombian league titles."

Nacional's dominance in recent years has turned them into one of the country's most successful companies, turning revenues of $78million last year.

"It's simply impossible to compete with them any more," moaned Junior owner Fuad Char after long-term transfer target Miguel Borja chose to join Nacional this summer. "They just always outbid you."

So powerful is Nacional's financial muscle that even Donald Trump was told to take his cash elsewhere following a failed $100m bid last year. "Maybe they think we're stupid," said the US presidential candidate. "We made an important bid but we won't be offering any more; these negotiations are now closed."

Swollen on another flood of transfer funds following post-Libertadores deals that saw Davinson Sanchez (Ajax), Sebastian Perez (Boca Juniors) and Marlos Moreno (Manchester City) depart, Nacional have now raked in over $20m this year alone. But with the Club World Cup on the horizon, Rueda has a tough job on his hands to pick up the pieces and rebuild a new side.

It is a familiar problem for successful South American sides, but Nacional can be proud of the fact that they have come a long way and, this time at least, their achievements will be remembered for all the right reasons. WS

## THE COACH

**Reinaldo RUEDA**
**Age 59 (16.04.57)**
Began his coaching career with Deportivo Cali's youth sides while taking German classes to gain entry to Cologne's German Sports University. After two years doing his badges, he returned to Colombia and had stints at Cortulua, Cali and Medellin. A bronze medal with the Colombia under-20s at the 2003 Youth World Cup in UAE followed, before he was promoted to senior national coach in 2004. However, he was sacked in 2006 by a federation who were irked at his support for the newly formed players' union. Led Honduras (2010) and Ecuador (2014) to World Cup qualification, and when Juan Carlos Osorio stepped down to join Sao Paulo last year he personally recommended Rueda to Nacional.

## THE KIT

HOME KIT SECOND KIT THIRD KIT

# THE SQUAD

## GOALKEEPERS

**Franco ARMANI (Arg)**

**Age 30 (16.10.86)**
He has won 10 titles with Nacional and is the club's longest-serving player. Born in Argentina but pondering Colombian citizenship.

**Cristian BONILLA**

**Age 23 (02.06.93)**
Plays second fiddle to Armani but is a regular in the national squad and was first choice at the Rio Olympics. Has still got a lot to prove.

**Luis MARTINEZ**

**Age 34 (11.07.82)**
Former international who once scored for Colombia in a friendly against Poland, he rarely gets a game for his club these days.

## DEFENDERS

**Felipe AGUILAR**

**Age 23 (20.01.93)**
Classy central defender who has rejoined Nacional after three years on loan at Alianza Petrolera. Considered to be a future Colombia mainstay.

**Daniel BOCANEGRA**

**Age 29 (23.04.87)**
Recently signed a new three-year deal with Nacional, he can play in numerous positions but is naturally a right back. Has a vicious long-range shot.

**Carlos CUESTA**

**Age 17 (09.03.99)**
Centre-back who can also play in midfield, he recently broke into the first-team set-up. His second name, Eccehomo, means "behold the man".

**Farid DIAZ**

**Age 33 (20.07.83)**
A late bloomer, his form over the last few seasons won him the regular left-back spot for Colombia. Played every minute of the Libertadores campaign.

**Gilberto GARCIA**

**Age 29 (27.01.87)**
A combative right-wing-back who had a spell with Real Valladolid, but left Spain after falling asleep while driving and crashing his car.

**Alexis HENRIQUEZ**

**Age 33 (01.02.83)**
Imposing captain who isn't the quickest but is strong in the air. He was also a member of the Once Caldas squad that won the Libertadores Cup in 2004.

**Roderick MILLER (Pan)**

**Age 24 (03.04.92)**
Panama international who started all three Centenario Cup games this summer before joining Nacional. Is yet to break into the first team.

**Francisco NAJERA**

**Age 33 (25.07.83)**
Only really a back-up option during his four years at the club, he claimed a first-team place after Davinson Sanchez left for Ajax in the summer.

**Rodin QUINONES**

**Age 21 (30.05.95)**
Right-winger turned right-back, he appeared at the 2015 Under-20 World Cup for Colombia but has yet to fulfil his early promise.

## MIDFIELDERS

**Diego ARIAS**

**Age 31 (15.06.85)**
Defensive midfielder and long-time servant of the club who has one cap for Colombia. Spent two years in Greece with PAOK.

**Alejandro BERNAL**

**Age 28 (03.06.88)**
Has won four league titles and three domestic cups but was injured for the Libertadores run. When fit, a superb passer and a towering influence.

**Orlando BERRIO**

**Age 25 (14.02.91)**
Right-winger who was recently called up by Colombia. One of the few players to have scored in both Sudamericana and Libertadores Cup Finals.

**Elkin BLANCO**

**Age 27 (09.05.89)**
Moved from rivals Millonarios in the summer after a spell in Moldova with Sherrif. Has limited technical ability but is disciplined and a fierce tackler.

**Alejandro GUERRA (Ven)**

**Age 31 (09.07.85)**
The first Venezuelan to win the Libertadores Cup, he has become a key player for club and country since arriving at Nacional in 2014.

**Andres IBARGUEN**

**Age 24 (07.05.92)**
Winger who scored 10 goals for Tolima last season, but a tendency to hold onto the ball has irked coach Rueda and limited his options at Nacional.

**Jhon MOSQUERA**

**Age 26 (08.05.90)**
Left-sided midfielder who ended an eight-year spell playing in Europe when he replaced winger Jonathan Copete in July.

**Juan Pablo NIETO**

**Age 23 (25.02.93)**
Creative midfielder who won the 2013 South American Youth Championship with Colombia but saw a move to Udinese collapse due to injury.

**Macnelly TORRES**

**Age 32 (01.11.84)**
Playmaker who has a knack for threading the killer pass, he lost his place in the Colombia squad for the 2014 World Cup after moving to Saudi Arabia.

**Mateus URIBE**

**Age 25 (21.03.91)**
Technically gifted, he started out in Argentina but signed this summer from Tolima. One of the few Nacional players born in Medellín.

## FORWARDS

**Miguel BORJA**

**Age 23 (26.01.93)**
Struck a record 19 goals for Cortulua before July's move to Nacional. Scored five more in the Libertadores, including the winner in the Final.

**Ezequiel RESCALDANI (Arg)**

**Age 24 (11.06.92)**
Signed on a three-year deal from Quilmes in July after two years in Spain with Malaga. Made a good first impression, scoring twice on his debut.

**Arley RODRIGUEZ**

**Age 23 (13.02.93)**
A winger or centre-forward, born on the Caribbean island of San Andres, he went to the Olympics but only appeared from the bench in Rio.

**(ages as of 04.11.16)**

NEW

PICTURE ESSAY

FUTSAL WORLD CUP

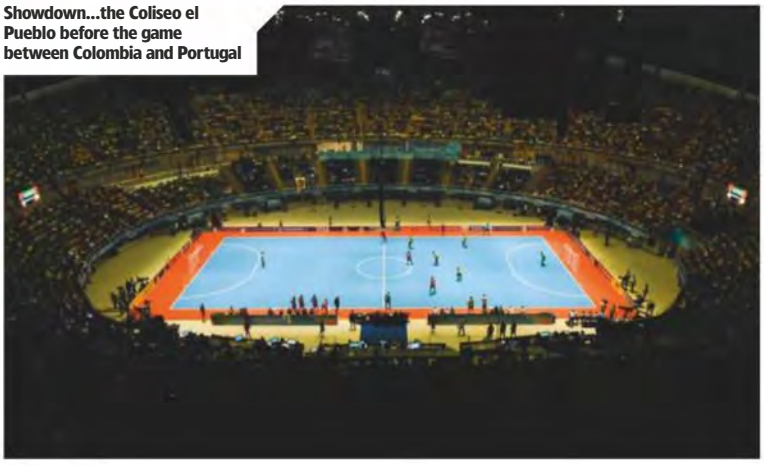
# World of interiors

In the first of a new series taking an alternative look at the game, we see how Argentina won the Futsal World Cup, which was held in Colombia

Taking hold...Juan Salas of Paraguay (left) gets to grips with Iran defender Afshin Kazemi

Support...Argentina fans celebrate a win against Portugal at the Coliseo el Pueblo in Cali

Crash...Suphawut Thueanklang of Thailand gets caught up in things against Azerbaijan in Medellin



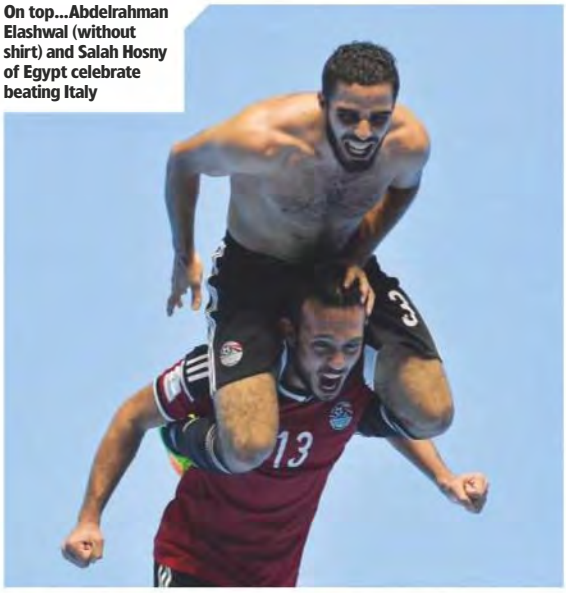
Showdown...the Coliseo el Pueblo before the game between Colombia and Portugal

Tense...Colombia players struggle to control their emotions in a penalty shoot-out against Paraguay

Friendly...Falcao is hoisted in the air by opponents Iran after Brazil are knocked out in the round of 16

NEW

Held...Brazil (in yellow) drew with Iran in the round of 16 before going out on penalties



On top...Abdelrahman Elashwal (without shirt) and Salah Hosny of Egypt celebrate beating Italy

Finish... Iran's Ahmad Esmaeilpour scores in Iran's 4-3 quarter-final victory over Paraguay

Chance...Argentina's Constantino Vaporaki takes on Russia keeper Gustavo

Golden moment... Argentina captain Fernando Wilhelm lifts the trophy

Third place...Iran's Hossein Tayyebi (right) and Mehran Alighadr after the play-off against Portugal

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

# Talentscout

FULL-BACKS

**WORDS:** Nick Bidwell

## Alex GRIMALDO

**Age 21 (20.09.95), Benfica (Por) & Spain**

**In a sentence**
Effervescent, attacking left-back and set-piece specialist who, arguably, has been Benfica's most impressive performer this season, proving beyond all doubt that a Camp Nou rejection slip need not be a death sentence.

**What they say**
Everton's Gerard Deulofeu, who played with him at Barcelona: "He will be the best left-back in the world. He's very strong and skilful. Those who know him are well aware of the force of will he has. He never gives up."
Former Benfica and Portugal midfielder Cesar Peixoto: "It seems to me that he's a player of immense talent, someone who combines great intensity and technical quality. Benfica must do all they can to keep him as long as possible. But in truth, if he continues his great current form, it will be difficult."
Ex-Benfica and Spain left-back Joan Capdevila: "His transfer to Benfica was a terrific move for him. He went from a top-class football school to another great European club. Benfica is the ideal place for him to grow."

> "He will be the best left-back in the world...those who know him are well aware of the force of will he has"
> Former team-mate Gerard Deulofeu

**The story so far**
Started as a central midfielder as a schoolboy with local club Valencia before gaining a place at Barcelona's La Masia academy, at the age of 13, where he was promptly switched to left-back. He made such good progress that, in September 2011, at 15 years and 349 days, he became the youngest-ever Barcelona B debutant. He later skippered the reserve side, but after being overlooked by first-team boss Luis Enrique, he signed for Benfica in December 2015. He was the youngest member of the Spain side that won the Euro Under-19 title in 2012.

**The next step**
He will hope to maintain the head of steam he has built up this autumn and help Benfica defend their domestic crown while going as far as possible in the Champions League. Though under contract at the Estadio da Luz until the summer of 2021, Manchester City and Manchester United are keeping tabs. He has a €60m release clause, with Barca due 15 per cent of any profit.

**Strengths**
Always eager to join the attack, he is especially dangerous when cutting inside from the flank and has quick feet, displays poise in tight situations and is able to deliver an accurate final ball. Also very tenacious defensively and takes a mean direct free-kick.

**Weaknesses**
Has a tendency to dive in for challenges. At just 5ft 7in, he can be vulnerable in the air.

In control...holding off Feirense midfielder Luis Aurelio

### 3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT GRIMALDO

- He sat on the sidelines for 11 months in his early career after rupturing cruciate ligaments in February 2013 while playing for Barcelona B.
- He was known for his strong opinions at Barca, criticising coach Luis Enrique and turning down a loan move to top-flight Levante.
- The Football Leaks website claims Benfica paid Barca €1.5m for him, plus €0.7m to a management firm for their help with the deal.

## Ander CAPA

**Age 24 (08.02.92), Eibar & Spain**
There were few right-backs more impressive in La Liga last season – which was quite some achievement for an ex-winger with no experience in a back-four role. He combines his defensive duties with strong, forceful excursions into enemy territory.

## Lukas KLOSTERMANN

**Age 20 (03.06.96), RB Leipzig & Germany**
A national sprint champion as a schoolboy, he shone at left-back in Germany's silver-winning campaign in Rio.

## Adam MASINA

**Age 22 (02.01.94), Bologna & Italy**
The Moroccan-born Italian under-21 was an attacker in his youth but switched to left-back during a loan stint at Italian lower-league side Giacomense. He played a vital part in Bologna's promotion in 2015.

## Sergi ROBERTO

**Age 24 (07.02.92), Barcelona & Spain**
Following the departure of Dani Alves, the former midfielder has made the right-back spot his own. He has taken to his new brief with aplomb, displaying intelligence and great technique.

## Jose Luis GOMEZ

**Age 23 (10.09.93), Lanus & Argentina**
After skipping school and turning up late for training in his younger years, the adventurous right-back is undeniably doing the right thing now, winning the Argentinian title with Racing Club, in 2014, and this year with Lanus.

## Douglas SANTOS

**Age 22 (22.03.94), Hamburg (Ger) & Brazil**
One of the unsung heroes of the Brazil side that won gold at this summer's Olympic Games, the powerful left-back soon celebrated by swapping Atletico Mineiro for the Bundesliga in a €7.5m deal. This is his second bite of the European cherry, having spent a short, unsuccessful spell in Italy with Udinese in 2013-14.

## Almamy TOURE

**Age 20 (28.04.96), Monaco (Fra) & Mali**
After starting out as a midfield holder or central defender, the Bamako-born youngster has carved out a markedly different first-team niche for himself in the principality, metamorphosing into a fine right-back. Noted for his goals and the quality of his crossing.

## Brandon VINCENT

**Age 22 (01.05.94), Chicago Fire & USA**
It's been a memorable year for the former Stanford University left-back and captain. Selected by Chicago Fire with the fourth pick overall in the MLS SuperDraft, he made his international debut for the USA, against Canada in February, and was chosen to compete in the MLS All-Star game this summer.

## Theo HERNANDEZ

**Age 19 (06.10.97), Alaves (Spa, on loan from Atletico Madrid, Spa) & France**
Left-back who has been at Atletico Madrid since he was 10. His father, Jean-Francois Hernandez, played for French clubs Toulouse, Sochaux and Marseille before moving to Spain with Compostela, Rayo Vallecano and Atletico.

World Soccer vintage

16 years ago

# December 2000

## New coaches sought to revive World Cup hopes

While *Selecao* star Rivaldo featured on the cover, it was international coaches who featured prominently inside *World Soccer*'s December 2000 edition, with a five-page story on the problems that England, Germany and Brazil were having in appointing new leaders in "a fight to save their World Cup campaigns".

Following a home defeat by Germany, which signalled the end of Kevin Keegan's reign, and a 0-0 draw in Finland, England had appointed their first foreign coach in Sven Goran Eriksson, and Gavin Hamilton wrote: "Keegan's abrupt departure had exposed the emotional brittleness of an inexperienced coach which many had feared from the outset.

"Keegan left England in the lurch, and technical director Howard Wilkinson immediately demonstrated his unsuitability for the post when he stepped in as caretaker-coach."

Hamilton continued: "[Eriksson's] appointment is a hugely progressive step by the FA, which has now recognised the depths to which English football has sunk. Quite simply, there are no English coaches who are up to the job.

"Under Eriksson, the likes of [Peter] Taylor and [Steve] McClaren will gain the experience to become national coach themselves in the future. The rescue mission is in full flow."

Meanwhile, the German Football Association (DFB) were also looking for a new coach, but their first choice, Bayer Leverkusen's Christoph Daum, was sensationally removed from the list of candidates after failing a drug test.

Under the headline "Daum and out", Nick Bidwell wrote: "Not only would the DFB promptly 'dissolve' its verbal agreement with Daum for him to become the next *Bundestrainer*, it was also time for a parting of the ways with Bayer Leverkusen, the club he had steered to three Bundesliga runners-up spots in the past four years."

Under the headline "Settling for second best", Brian Homewood wrote about the coaching problems affecting Brazil, commenting: "Luxemburgo has gone, taking with him his designer suits, his massive ego and his irritating habit of talking complete gibberish."

One of those who turned the job down was Luiz Felipe Scolari who, as Homewood added, "has won a plethora of titles with Gremio and Palmeiras in the past decade" and was "now happily settled in to a new job with Cruzeiro".

Of course, Scolari was eventually persuaded to take the job and within 20-months he had led Brazil to World Cup victory in Japan. WS

Special...the five-page feature on international coaches

WS COVER STORY

### International rescue

Gavin Hamilton reports on the FA's bold bid to return English footba

SVEN GORAN ERIKSSON arrived in England for a whirlwind press conference as torrential rain lashed across the country, causing the worst floods for half a century. His mission: to rescue English football from drowning in a sea of mediocrity.

In his first meeting with the English media since being appointed to replace Kevin Keegan, Eriksson impressed with his intelligence, calmness and sense of humour. Significantly, in a country that won the World Cup 34 years ago, Eriksson also demonstrated his knowledge of football history.

"I can understand there are people saying England should have an English manager," he said. "We, in Sweden, had an English manager [George Raynor] at the World Cup in 1958 so why, many years later, shouldn't a Swede go to England?"

Eriksson will be paid an annual salary of £2million over five years, with a £1m bonus if England qualify for the 2002 World Cup.

"I didn't take this job for the money or the weather," Eriksson said. "I took it because England are a big challenge. I could have got more money if I had stayed in Italy or gone to Spain."

Eriksson was accompanied by the Football Association's chief executive, Adam Crozier, and the Arsenal vice-chairman, David Dein, who played a vital role in persuading the Swede to leave Lazio at the end of the season, although the FA hopes it will be earlier.

Crozier has emerged with credit from the whole affair, despite his initial, desperate, attempts to persuade Keegan to stay on after the latter quit following the 1-0 defeat by Germany in the last game staged at Wembley.

Keegan's abrupt departure had exposed the emotional brittleness of an inexperienced coach which many had feared from the outset. Keegan left England

'Sven was our No 1 choice. He's one of the best in the world. At no stage did we approach another manager'

— *Adam Crozier, FA chief executive*

selected a confused line-up, which failed to beat Finland four days later. The result left England bottom of Group 9, below Albania, with one point from a possible six.

The FA began its search for a successor by setting up a seven-man committee – dubbed the G7 – comprising Crozier, Dein, Wilkinson, Dave Richards (FA chairman), David Davies (FA chief press officer), Peter Ridsdale (chairman of Leeds) and Noel White (chairman, FA international committee).

Crozier insisted no stone would be left unturned in the search for the right man. The G7 drew up a list of selection criteria, which included, first and foremost, evidence of sustained success. This, claimed FA sources, ruled out Terry Venables, who had been hastily anointed as the 'people's choice' by the tabloid press. "Integrity" was also included as one of the criteria, just in case there was any chance that Venables had crept back into favour with the FA.

With Venables ruled out and most of the current crop of Premiership managers, including Sir Alex Ferguson, ruling themselves out, it was clear the FA was looking overseas. Nor would it be rushed into making an appointment.

With this in mind, Bobby Robson was approached with a view to taking temporary charge, starting with the friendly against Italy in Turin on November 15. Leicester's Peter Taylor and Manchester United assistant manager Steve McClaren would have acted as Robson's assistants. However, Newcastle chairman Freddie Fletcher blocked such a move, and the FA, somewhat taken aback, put Taylor and McClaren in joint charge for the trip to Turin.

Meanwhile, approaches were made to Eriksson and Arsene Wenger, although given Dein's key role on th ɛ G7 committee, it is highly unlikely that the FA

Wenger's release from Arsenal.

> "[The FA] has now recognised the depths to which English football has sunk. Quite simply, there are no English coaches who are up to the job"
>
> Gavin Hamilton

## the top table of the world game

approached, while the names of Johan Cruyff and Martin O'Neill were late additions to the speculation.

In the end, though, the FA got its man. "Sven was the unanimous choice and is without doubt one of the best coaches in the world, with an excellent record of sustained success," said Crozier. "At no stage did we approach any other manager."

He added, significantly: "Sven comes in with no bias towards any club or player," a reference to an alleged split in the England camp between players from Manchester United and Liverpool.

Inevitably, the appointment of England's first foreign coach attracted a tidal wave of tabloid hysteria. But Eriksson will have no problem ignoring the tantrums thrown by a handful of xenophobes.

Eriksson has survived – and indeed thrived – in hothouse atmospheres in Rome, Lisbon and Florence. His successes over more than two decades put Venables' brief success at Barcelona into perspective.

Critics of Eriksson's appointment have been quick to point to his lack of international experience, but the FA, for once, appears to have a long-term strategy. In recent weeks, Crozier and Wilkinson have been fulsome in their praise for the French system of managerial continuity (see opposite).

But before that system can be put in place, England need a coach who can get the best from mediocre players, then spot and utilise the young talent that is coming through.

No team has ever won the World Cup or European Championship with a foreign coach. But nor has any country been successful with such mediocre players as the Nevilles, Andrew Cole and Dennis Wise, nor with a team which changes tactics from one game to the next. Eriksson's biggest strength is as a tactician and organiser of teams.

His appointment is a hugely progressive step by the FA, which has now recognised the depths to which English football has sunk. Quite simply, there are no English coaches who are up to the job. Under Eriksson, the likes of Taylor and McClaren will gain the experience to become national coach themselves in the future. The rescue mission is in full flow.

European trophy, the Cup-winners Cup, but Lazio throw away six-point lead in Serie A in the spring and cede title to Milan by a single point on last day of season.

**1999-2000** Coaches Lazio to League and Cup double, only their second *scudetto* and their first in 26 years. Lazio pip Juventus for title on dramatic final day of season.

**October 2000** Appointed England coach, on five-year contract from July 2001.

# Continuity counts

### Nick Bidwell on the French formula for international success

For two-and-a-half decades France has played the continuity card when choosing the coach of its national team, with five out of six appointments being in-house affairs.

The first was that of Michel Hidalgo in 1976. He had served a two-year apprenticeship as assistant to national team boss, the Romanian Stefan Kovacs, and it proved an inspired move. Over the next eight years, Hidalgo's vibrant side put French football back on the map, reaching the 1982 World Cup semi-finals and winning the 1984 European Championship.

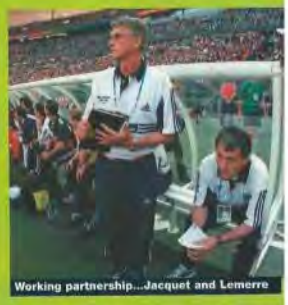
Long before Hidalgo departed in the summer of 1984, federation president Fernand Sastre had decided ex-international midfielder Henri Michel would be the next to lead *Les Bleus*. On ending his playing career in 1982, Michel joined the national coaching staff and before succeeding Hidalgo, led the Olympic side to gold in Los Angeles.

Michel led France to third place at the 1986 World Cup, but failure to reach Euro 88 put him on notice and a disastrous 1-1 draw in Cyprus in an Italia 90 qualifier spelt the end of his reign.

But there would be no appointment from within this time and former French playmaking great Michel Platini was brought in to replace Michel in the autumn of 1988.

While Platini had no coaching experience or formal qualifications, initially he worked wonders, guiding the team to eight wins out of eight on route to Euro 92. But in the finals, France flopped at the first round stage and Platini quit.

Not surprisingly, the federation subsequently reverted to apparatchik type. Platini's No 2, Gerard Houllier, was made national coach and after his side threw away qualification for USA 94, second-in-command Aime Jacquet got the nod.


Working partnership...Jacquet and Lemerre

Jacquet, of course, became a national hero by masterminding the 1998 World Cup triumph but at the time of his appointment, he was a far from popular choice in the media or among fans. Many wanted a fresh start with a proven club boss such as Luis Fernandez, Arsene Wenger or Jean Tigana.

Nor are the French rules of succession etched in stone. They did not immediately plump for his assistant, Roger Lemerre, when Jacquet stood down after France 98. The shortlist comprised Auxerre's Guy Roux, Tigana, Wenger, Fernandez and ex-Nantes coach Jean-Claude Suaudeau and it was only when each was ruled out that Lemerre rose to the surface.

The French selection process, however, has stood the test of time. No in-vogue club coaches, lots of success.

## The most successful coaches of recent times

**ROGER LEMERRE**
France, Euro 2000
– Previous experience as assistant to Aime Jacquet at France 98

**AIME JACQUET**
France, 1998 World Cup
– Previous experience as assistant to Gerard Houllier during 1994 World Cup qualifiers

**BERTI VOGTS**
Germany, Euro 96
– Previous experience as assistant to Franz Beckenbauer

**CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA**
Brazil, 1994 World Cup
– Previously manager in 1982-83, also on staff as physical fitness trainer in 1970

Champion...Beckenbauer

**RICHARD MOLLER NIELSEN**
Denmark, Euro 92
– Previous experience as Under-21 and Olympic coach

**FRANZ BECKENBAUER**
West Germany, 1990 World Cup
– No previous experience

**RINUS MICHELS**
Holland, Euro 88
– Previous experience as coach of Holland at 1974 World Cup

**CARLOS BILARDO**
Argentina, 1986 World Cup
– Previous experience as coach of Colombia in 1982 World Cup qualifiers

**MICHEL HIDALGO**
France, Euro 84
– Previous experience as assistant to Stefan Kovacs

**ENZO BEARZOT**
Italy, 1982 World Cup
– Previous experience in charge of Under-23 side, then as team manager alongside Fulvio Bernardini



## Also in this issue...

**p6**
John Holmesdale reported on the problems affecting Diego Maradona as he turned 40, writing: "The miracle, of course, is that he has made it this far. In the past year, Maradona has come close to death on a number of occasions. He has spent the past few months in Cuba, enjoying the hospitality of Fidel Castro, following heart problems attributed to a cocaine overdose. In September, he drove his car into a bus. The car was a write-off, but Diego stepped out of the wreckage, apparently unharmed."

**p25**
In a Spotlight on Andriy Shevchenko, who was beginning to turn heads at Milan, his former club coach at Dynamo Kiev, Valeriy Lobanovskyi, considered him above Zinedine Zidane and Brazilian duo Ronaldo and Rivaldo as "the greatest player in the world". Lobanovskyi told Kier Radnedge: "Others have outstanding specific qualities, but Shevchenko's greatness embraces all aspects of the game, including the appreciation of the prime importance of the team."

**p74**
Gavin Hamilton said of Premier League new boys Ipswich Town, who were in impressive form under manager George Burley: "Ipswich's tight passing game has won many admirers and the team have already beaten Leeds and held both Manchester United and Arsenal to draws."

**p83**
Nick Bidwell profiled a 19-year-old who was setting Bulgarian football alight, revealing: "Dimitar Berbatov's progress has been rapid. He stepped up to CSKA [Sofia's] senior squad only in January last year, but three expertly taken goals in his first two league starts turned him into an overnight sensation in the country. Since then the achievements have come thick and fast – a first international cap against Greece, a first international goal versus Chile three months later and a 14-goal haul for CSKA last season."

**10 years ago**
Diego Simeone leads Estudiantes to the Argentinian apertura title in the most dramatic of fashion. Tied on points with Boca Juniors, a play-off game was needed and Estudiantes won 2-1 in Boca's Bombonera stadium.

**20 years ago**
Saudi Arabia win the Asian Cup for the third time in the last four tournaments. After beating China 4-3 in the quarter-finals, they did not score another goal in open play, beating both Iran and then hosts UAE in the Final on penalties after 0-0 draws.

**30 years ago**
Argentina's River Plate – featuring World Cup winners Nery Pumpido, Oscar Ruggeri and Hector Enrique – beat European Cup winners Steaua Bucharest to claim their first and only Intercontinental Cup (World Club Cup).

**40 years ago**
Leading 3-0 from the home leg, QPR hang on in Cologne to draw 4-4 on aggregate to go through to the UEFA Cup quarter-finals thanks to an away goal in Germany. Cologne had a young Harald Schumacher and Preben Elkjaer in their ranks.

**50 years ago**
Shamrock Rovers find themselves within four minutes of beating Bayern Munich in the European Cup-winners Cup. Ahead on away goals with the aggregate score level at 3-3, a late Gerd Muller strike ended Irish dreams.

FOOTBALL KITS

TEL: 0845 8382442
EMAIL: SALES@SUBSIDE.CO.UK
WEB: SUBSIDE.CO.UK

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO OFFICIAL WORLDWIDE FOOTBALL PRODUCTS

BARCELONA AWAY KIT 2016/17 NOW AVAILABLE

WE ONLY STOCK THE OFFICIAL PSPRO PLAYER SIZE PREMIER LEAGUE PRINTING FOR ADULT SHIRTS!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SUBSIDE.CO.UK
We pride ourselves in sourcing official replica, limited editions and exclusive products from around the globe.

Official League, Cup, Tournament & Winners Sleeve Patches available, please see website for details

1617 Schalke 04 Home Shirt + No.8
£77.94 adidas

1617 Borussia Dortmund Away Shirt + No.13
£72.94 PUMA

1617 Chelsea 3rd Shirt Long Sleeve + No.10
£77.94 adidas

1617 Barcelona Away Shirt LS (Sponsored) + No.10
£77.94

1617 AS Roma 3rd Shirt + No.10
£69.99

SUBSIDE SPORTS LTD: TEL: 0845 8382442 / EMAIL: SALES@SUBSIDE.CO.UK / WEB: SUBSIDE.CO.UK

PROGRAMMES

FREE
FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES

To receive a FREE programme plus a copy of our latest catalogue (listing several thousand different mint condition Big Match, League, Scottish, Irish, Foreign and Non-League teams programmes etc.) please send your name and address to:

STEVE EARL FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES (DEPT.WS)
BROAD STREET, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK, NR351AH, ENGLAND
or phone 01986 892621 or visit www.footballprogs.co.uk

2016 Slovenia v England (English Edition) £9.50 (inc.p&p) 2016 Slovenia v England (Slovenian Edition) £9.50 (inc.p&p)

( Credit/Debit Cards & PayPal accepted )
(Credit/Debit Cards & PayPal accepted)

FOOTBALL KITS

"Looking for a classic shirt for Christmas?

TOP CORNER SHIRTS
Club and International shirts from around the world
USE DISCOUNT CODE WSC10 TO GET 10% OFF! VALID TO 10/12

Go to www.topcornershirts.co.uk to find some retro classics."

@topcornershirts @shirtstopcorner topcornershirts

MISCELLANEOUS

If Surgery is not your Option

We are here for you!

YOUR BIO ENERGY SUPPLY
MICROCURRENT

www.theNonSurgicalClinic.com

We use Technology that empower Carl Lewis to win 4 Olympic Gold Medals

To regenerate your Sports Injuries
In the shortest possible Time Frame
To get you back to the game

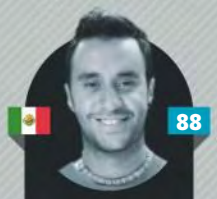
Call now : 07918528880

To book your Appointment

# World Service

INCORPORATING Global diary

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents



88

**MARTIN DEL PALACIO LANGER**
Mexico

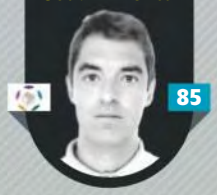
90

**STEVE MENARY**
Bangladesh

86

**JOHN DUERDEN**
China

**TIM VICKERY**
South America



85

85

Changing...San Lorenzo (right) taking on Gremio in the Libertadores Cup


**DIARY**
84 Comprehensive global news

**CLUB FOOTBALL**
92 Results, tables, fixtures

Struggle...China (in red) on the defensive against Syria

86

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 26, 2016

# Global diary

*A comprehensive record of recent events around the world*

## Friday September 30

**ENGLAND:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic's agent, Mino Raiola, claims the Swedish striker rejected a move to China worth €100m when he left Paris Saint-Germain to join Manchester United in the summer.

## Saturday October 1

**ENGLAND:** Tottenham Hotspur hand Pep Guardiola his first defeat as Manchester City manager as a 2-0 win takes them a point behind their opponents at the top of the league.
**FRANCE:** Monaco win 7-0 away at Metz – their biggest-ever victory on the road in Ligue 1.
**FUTSAL:** Argentina win the 2016 Futsal World Cup in Colombia, beating Russia 5-4 in the Final.
**GERMANY:** Carlo Ancelotti misses out on equalling the record of six straight wins for a coach in his debut season in the Bundesliga as Bayern Munich draw 1-1 with Cologne.
**SWITZERLAND:** Basle's 100 per cent start to the Swiss Super League ends with their 10th game, a 1-1 draw at home to Thun.

## Sunday October 2

**FRANCE:** Mario Balotelli scores a late winner and is then sent off as Nice beat Lorient 2-1.
**GERMANY:** Schalke gain their first points of the season, at the sixth time of asking, beating Borussia Monchengladbach 4-0.
**IRAQ:** A 4-3 victory on penalties against Iran in the Final gives Iraq a first AFC Under-16 title and a place at the Under-17 World Cup, along with Iran, Japan, North Korea and hosts India.
**ITALY:** Udinese sack Giuseppe Iachini, who was in charge for just eight games, the day after they lose 3-0 at home to Lazio.
**LIBERTADORES CUP:** Brazil will get two extra places – with Argentina, Chile and Colombia handed one each – as the Libertadores Cup expands to 44 teams next year. The winners of the Copa Sudamericana will also gain direct entry.
**NIGERIA:** A 4-0 win over visiting El Kanemi Warriors earns Enugu Rangers International their first league title for 32 years.
**SPAIN:** Andres Iniesta plays his 600th game for Barcelona but is on the losing side as they go down 4-3 at Celta Vigo. Valencia keeper Diego Alves saves two penalties to extend his Liga record to 19 but Atletico Madrid still win 2-0.
**TURKEY:** Samuel Eto'o makes his first appearance for Antalyaspor since being suspended by the club for posts on social media but can't prevent a 3-1 defeat at Galatasaray.

## Monday October 3

**ENGLAND:** Swansea City, who have not won in the Premier League since the opening day of the season, sack Francesco Guidolin on his 61st birthday and replace him with former USA coach Bob Bradley.

Joint second...Edinson Cavani of Uruguay

## Tuesday October 4

**MALI:** Stade Malien beat Djoliba 2-0 to claim the league title for a fourth successive season.
**SLOVAKIA:** Vladimir Weiss is dropped from Slovakia's squad for the forthcoming World Cup qualifiers following reports that he refused police requests to undergo a breathalyser test after being stopped in Bratislava on Sunday.

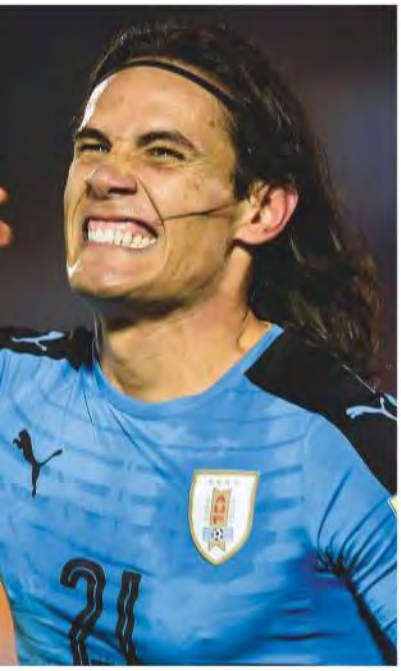
## Wednesday October 5

**HAITI:** The Caribbean Cup game between Haiti and French Guiana, which was to be played at the Stade Sylvio Cator in Port-au-Prince, is postponed due to Hurricane Matthew, which will leave more than 850 people dead.
**SCOTLAND:** The Scottish Football Association, who have a strict no-gambling policy on football matches, charge Rangers' midfielder Joey Barton for allegedly placing 44 bets on games between July 1 and September 15 this year.

## Thursday October 6

**BRAZIL:** Neymar's goal in the 5-0 victory against Bolivia was his 49th for his country, taking him past Zico on Brazil's list of all-time top scorers. He now lies fourth, behind Romario (55), Ronaldo (62) and Pele (72).
**FRANCE:** Nice's Mario Balotelli will not serve a suspension following his sending-off on Sunday after referee Olivier Thual admits he was wrong to show him a second yellow.
**ICELAND:** Alfred Finnbogason and

Seven up...Metz goalkeeper Thomas Didillon and defender Milan Bisevac (left) try to keep out a rampant Monaco and Gabriel Boschilia



Ragnar Sigurdsson score in second-half injury time as Iceland come from behind to beat Finland 3-2.
**KOSOVO:** A first-ever competitive "home" fixture – which is played in Albania – ends in defeat for Kosovo as they are beaten 6-0 in a World Cup qualifier by Croatia.
**URUGUAY:** Edinson Cavani scores twice in a 3-0 win over Venezuela to go level second with Diego Forlan as Uruguay's second-highest goalscorer of all time with 36.
**UZBEKISTAN:** A run of nine straight World Cup qualifying wins comes to an end as Uzbekistan lose 1-0 at home to Iran.

**Friday** October 7

**AUSTRALIA:** On the opening day of the new A-League season, Brisbane Roar equalise in the sixth minute of injury time to draw 1-1 at home to Melbourne Victory despite captain Matt McKay being sent off on his 200th appearance for the club.
**COSTA RICA:** Eduardo Li, former ➤

Off...Brisbane Roar's Matt McKay (left)

## South America

TIM VICKERY

Big guns...Argentina's Boca Juniors (in blue) and Cerro Porteno of Paraguay in this year's Libertadores

# Libertadores set for shake-up next year

### Danger that changes to the Cup may backfire

'In South America we have plenty of talent and passion," said CONMEBOL president Alejandro Dominguez as he announced an overhaul of the continent's club competitions. "But for decades we haven't had enough planning, standardisation and generation of revenue."

But there seems to be as much panic as planning in the changes that have so suddenly been made – panic caused by the fear that South America's top clubs might break away and form their own competition.

As it stands, the Libertadores Cup is played in the first half of the year, and the Sudamericana Cup in the second. But from 2017, the Libertadores will run from February to late November, with the Sudamericana played from June to December.

The other main alteration is the expansion of the qualifying round. The existing format of eight groups of four is retained, but 16 teams will now compete for four slots in a mini two-round qualifying tournament.

Bumping the qualifying round up to 16 has created some extra places – two have gone to Brazil, and one each to Argentina, Chile and Colombia. While Brazilian sides have been very disappointing in recent years, it is by far South America's largest country with the biggest TV market. And the recent performances of Chilean clubs have been even worse, but the country is relatively wealthy and able to generate extra revenue.

However, the sudden nature of the changes could backfire. There was certainly no intention to force out the Mexicans, whose clubs have been taking part since 1998, but it remains unclear if Mexican sides would be able to conciliate their own domestic calendar with the new arrangements.

It is also unclear how the relationship between the Libertadores and the Sudamericana will work, with the latter set to lose two of its most attractive features.

When the Sudamericana is played, it is the only international club show in town and includes some of the best teams. This year's Sudamericana, for example, included reigning continental champions Atletico Nacional of Colombia and their predecessors, San Lorenzo of Argentina. Both also took part in this year's Libertadores, but that will no longer be possible. True, the 12 losers in the new expanded qualifying round will receive the consolation prize of a Sudamericana place. but the competition will struggle for quality while competing for attention with the Libertadores.

Then there is the obvious problem with a February-November Libertadores: the summer transfer window.

Atletico Nacional, provide a good example. The Copa America forced a six-week pause between the quarter-finals and the semis and before the action resumed in July they lost key players Victor Ibarbo, who returned to Europe when his loan expired, and Jonathan Copete who moved to Brazil. They also sold Marlos Moreno to Manchester City and centre-back Davinson Sanchez to Ajax, but were able to keep the pair until the end of the Libertadores because it came to a close in July.

Had the competition stretched on for another four months this would not have been possible, and in future the Libertadores is likely to lose many of its outstanding young talent before the crunch knock-out rounds start. WS

➤ head of the Costa Rican FA, pleads guilty to charges of accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes for awarding lucrative marketing contracts.
**FRANCE:** Making his first international start for five years, Kevin Gameiro scores twice as France beat Bulgaria 4-1.
**PORTUGAL:** Playing in his first international since he was injured in the Final of Euro 2016, Cristiano Ronaldo finds the net four times as Portugal thrash Andorra 6-0.
**RUSSIA:** UEFA suspended CSKA Moscow's Roman Eremenko for 30 days. Although no official reason is given, media reports suggest the ban could be due to the midfielder taking snus, a tobacco substitute that is illegal in Russia.
**USA:** Goals by Chris Wondolowski and Julian Green give USA a 2-0 victory in their first friendly on Cuban soil since 1947.

## Saturday October 8

**ARMENIA:** Gor Malakyan is sent off after just three minutes as Armenia suffer their heaviest-ever home defeat, losing 5-0 to Romania.
**AUSTRALIA:** A new A-League record attendance of 61,880 fans are present to watch Sydney beat cross-city rivals Western Sydney Wanderers 4-0.
**AZERBAIJAN:** After just two games, a 1-0 victory at home to Norway gives Azerbaijan a sixth point in what is already their best-ever qualifying campaign.
**IVORY COAST:** Ivorian defender Serge Aurier saves the life of Mali's Moussa Doumbia by preventing the striker from swallowing his tongue after he is knocked unconscious. However, Aurier goes on to cause controversy later in the game – which Ivory Coast win 3-1 – by celebrating Salif Coulibaly's own goal with a throat-slitting gesture.
**GERMANY:** Joachim Low overtakes Helmut Schon in second place with his 140th game as coach of Germany, who beat Czech Republic 3-0. Only Sepp Herberger took charge of more games, with 167.
**GUYANA:** Even a last-minute headed goal from goalkeeper Kai McKenzie-Lyle fails to prevent Guyana going down 3-2 to Suriname in a Caribbean Cup qualifier.

## Sunday October 9

**AUSTRIA:** A 13-game unbeaten run in Euro and World Cup qualifying for Austria comes to an end with a 3-2 defeat away to Serbia.
**ITALY:** A 3-2 victory in Macedonia sees Italy extend their unbeaten ➤

CHINA

JOHN DUERDEN

# Looking to the future with Lippi

## Gao goes as China's World Cup hopes fade

Bottom of their group with just one point from four games, and with any hope of reaching the 2018 World Cup fading fast, China have replaced coach Gao Hongbo with 2006 World Cup winner Marcello Lippi.

Having quit the game in 2014 after winning a third straight Chinese Super League title, the 68-year-old Italian takes over a national side that was always going to struggle to reach Russia, despite the hundreds of millions of dollars being pumped into the domestic game. Unfortunately for Lippi, and his predecessor, that huge cash injection has mostly left the country, going to Europe and South America to bring in famous foreign players and coaches, leaving little for help in improving the health of the national side.

Gao resigned just minutes after a 2-0 defeat in Uzbekistan left China eight points off the top-two spots in a six-team qualifying group that provide automatic entry to Russia 2018. In truth, they had been lucky to make the final stage at all after squeezing through the previous round of qualification as the worst of the best group runners-up.

Despite the pessimism, around 10,000 fans followed the national team to Seoul for the opening game, where for the first 70 minutes they witnessed the same old story. South Korea, who had lost only once in 30 previous meetings between the two sides, were 3-0 up and coasting – until they fell asleep, let in two goals in quick succession and had to hang on for the win in the face of Chinese pressure.

Boosted by the narrow defeat and following a respectable goalless draw at home to Carlos Queiroz's Iran five days later, hopes were high for October games against Syria and Uzbekistan. As such, it was almost inevitable that China would lose at home to Syria – a side that struggles to find time to train and is not allowed to play games on home soil.

Back...Marcello Lippi returns to the game as coach of China

Gone...Gao Hongbo

Threat...Syria's Mahmoud Al Mawas bears down on the Chinese goal

A 1-0 loss in Xian saw thousands of fans protesting outside the Shaanxi Stadium, calling for heads to roll at the Chinese Football Association.

Instead, it was Gao who lost his job five days later, following the defeat in Tashkent. The coach told reporters that it had already been decided that he would do so should China lose to Uzbekistan. The 2-0 scoreline flattered the losers a little and sealed his fate.

There were pictures of a lonely looking Gao back home the next day at the airport, but in truth he had only ever been a caretaker, drafted in for a second spell when French coach Alain Perrin was axed earlier this year. Gao had been given the job permanently but never looked like he really wanted it and had offered to work with a foreign coach.

But even though Russia maybe a step too far for Lippi, there will be plenty of great tests to be had against top Asian opposition over the next 12 months in time for the 2019 Asian Cup and qualification for the 2022 World Cup.

Qatar, of course, will be hosts in 2022 and they are desperate to qualify for a World Cup before it comes to the Middle East. But that hope is not looking good

as their 1-0 win over Syria came after three successive losses, at the hands of Iran, Uzbekistan and South Korea. Former boss Jorge Fossati was drafted in after the second of those defeats but there has been debate in Doha as to whether the team, which is full of players born around the world, has the requisite passion.

Uzbekistan, on the other hand, definitely have that. The big question for the Central Asians is whether they have the nerve. Nine points from their first four games puts them one behind Iran and two ahead of South Korea, and the performances against Qatar and China were clinical and impressive.

The Uzbeks have a nice mix of veterans, with two-time Asian player of the year Server Djeparov backed-up by Alexander Geynrikh and Odil Ahmedov, and youngsters Igor Sergeev and Otabek Shukurov.

In the past, they have lost just when the World Cup finals looked within their reach. So while China were already looking to the future, for Uzbekistan a trip to Russia in 2018 looks a very real possibility. WS

## ARGENTINA'S WORLD CUP SHOWDOWN

Lionel Messi's return cannot come soon enough for Argentina, who slipped to fifth place in the South American World Cup qualifying table after a draw with Peru and a defeat at home to Paraguay.

Argentina's results with and without Messi make his importance to the team all too clear.

After 10 rounds of qualifiers, injury restricted him to three games, all of which were won. The remaining seven brought just one win, four draws and two defeats, both at home – doubling the number of times Argentina have been beaten on their own soil in qualification history.

And on November 10, Argentina visit a resurgent Brazil, who have gone from sixth to top spot in the table with four straight wins.

The top four will go through automatically. The team finishing fifth – currently Argentina – will play off against opponents from Oceania.

While it's true that Argentina are just a point off third place, a less optimistic reading is that they are just two points clear of seventh, the position filled by reigning continental champions Chile.

*Tim Vickery*

➤ record in qualifying games to 53 – a run stretching to over a decade.

**NIGERIA:** Kelechi Iheanacho's goal in a 2-1 victory over Zambia makes him the first player to score in four successive matches for Nigeria.

### Monday October 10

**ANDORRA:** Alex Martinez celebrates his 18th birthday by coming off the bench to score Andorra's first World Cup goal for more than seven years as they lose 2-1 to Switzerland.

**BELGIUM:** Christian Benteke's goal against Gibraltar after 8.1 seconds is the fastest of all time in a World Cup qualifier and Belgium's quickest ever. The Crystal Palace forward goes on to grab a hat-trick in a 6-0 win.

**OLYMPICS:** Speaking at Windsor Park in Northern Ireland, FIFA president Gianni Infantino says a joint British Olympic football team would not endanger the four home nations' independent status.

**PORTUGAL:** Aged 20 years and 11 months, Andre Silva eclipses Eusebio as Portugal's youngest-ever scorer of a hat-trick with his treble in a 6-0 thrashing of the Faroe Islands.

### Tuesday October 11

**CROATIA:** A group of men wielding metal bars attack referee Bruno Maric at a restaurant in Stobrec, near Split. It is thought they were fans of Hajduk Split, who believe he favours rivals Dinamo Zagreb.

**ROMANIA:** The Romanian Football Federation claim several of their players have money and personal items stolen from their hotel rooms before their 0-0 draw in Kazakhstan.

**SAN MARINO:** Although they lose 4-1 in Norway, Mattia Stefanelli's goal is San Marino's first away from home in a World Cup qualifier for 15 years.

**SPAIN:** Javier Tebas is re-elected unopposed for a second four-year term as president of La Liga.

**URUGUAY:** Luis Suarez scores in Uruguay's 2-2 draw with Colombia to join Argentina's Hernan Crespo as the joint-highest goalscorer of all time in the South American World Cup qualifiers with 19 goals.

**VENEZUELA:** A power cut in the 74th minute of the game between Venezuela and Brazil in Merida plunged the World Cup qualifier into darkness for 22 minutes. Brazil were leading 2-0 at the time and win by that score after the match restarted.

### Wednesday October 12

**GERMANY:** Former Croatia striker Ivica Olic, who currently plays for German second-tier side Munich 1860, is suspended for two ➤

➤ games and fined £18,000 for gambling on matches, including in the league in which he plays.

## Thursday October 13

**DENMARK:** Copenhagen chief executive Anders Horsholt confirms discussions have been held over a proposed Atlantic League that could feature teams such as Ajax, Celtic and Rangers.
**ENGLAND:** Chelsea sign the biggest kit deal in Premier League history, with Nike agreeing to pay £900m over the next 15 years.

## Friday October 14

**AUSTRALIA:** Brendon Santalab scores both goals as Western Sydney Wanderers avenge May's A-League Grand Final defeat by beating Adelaide United 2-1.
**BELARUS:** A 1-0 victory away at Granit Mikashevichi seals BATE's 11th successive Belarusian Premier League title with five games to spare.
**GERMANY:** Borussia Dortmund are held to a 1-1 draw by Hertha Berlin but set a new club record of 25 successive unbeaten home games in the Bundesliga.

## Saturday October 15

**AUSTRALIA:** Tim Cahill scores on his A-League debut as Melbourne City beat Melbourne Victory 4-1.
**ENGLAND:** Taking charge of the team for the first time since his appointment as permanent manager, Mike Phelan's Hull City are thrashed 6-1 at Bournemouth.
**SOUTH AFRICA:** Mamelodi Sundowns beat Zamalek of Egypt 3-0 in their home leg of the CAF Champions League Final.
**SOUTH KOREA:** Jeonbuk Motors' K-League record run of 33 games unbeaten ends with a 3-2 loss at home to Jeju United.

Clean sheet...Nick Rimando

**SPAIN:** Despite winning 6-1 away at Betis, Real Madrid remain in second place on goal difference behind Atletico Madrid, who thrash Granada 7-1. Sevilla's 3-2 win at Leganes is their first away from home in La Liga for 17 months.

## Sunday October 16

**GERMANY:** RB Leipzig beat Wolfsburg 1-0 but their penalty miss is the fifth of the weekend in the Bundesliga – a record for a single round of games in the German top flight.
**NIGERIA:** Izu Joseph, a defender with Nigerian Premier League side Shooting Stars, dies after being hit by a stray bullet in a gun battle between soldiers and militants in his home town of Okaki in Bayelsa State.
**USA:** After being dropped from the starting line-up, Didier Drogba refuses to take a place on the substitutes' bench as Montreal Impact draw 2-2 with Toronto. Nick Rimando extends his MLS record

MEXICO

Martin Del Palacio Langer

# Osorio feels the heat

## Mexico travel to the US for crunch World Cup showdown

When the USA face Mexico on November 11 in the opening game of the final CONCACAF qualifying round – known as "the Hexagonal" – for the 2018 World Cup, on one side there will be a team that are regional champions and have lost only one of their last 26 games, while lining up opposite them is a Mexican side that suffered more than expected in reaching the final group of six.

Since taking charge of Mexico in October 2015, Juan Carlos Osorio has lost only one of the 15 games he has been coach for. The team has been extremely solid defensively and can call on more than a dozen players plying their trade in big European leagues. Yet despite this, a good deal of the local press and many Mexican fans are clamouring for a change.

The main reason is that sole defeat. Osorio wasn't popular in Mexico to begin with, mostly because he's Colombian and doesn't have a big name, but he was tolerated while decent results kept the waters calm. But that all changed at the Copa America Centenario. Facing Chile in the quarter-finals, *El Tri* lost 7-0 – their worst defeat in more than 50 years – and the relationship has been severely damaged ever since.

So, with the visitors' coach hanging by a thread, logic dictates that the hosts will be full of confidence and should be considered favourites. But this is a region where things are never really what they seem.

The US also suffered in the Copa America, with their 4-0 semi-final loss to Argentina being the largest margin of defeat suffered by a host in the tournament since 1959. However, earlier wins against Paraguay, Costa Rica and Ecuador steadied coach Jurgen Klinsmann's situation after he had been criticized for results at the 2014 World Cup, and the emergence

Potential...USA have high hopes for teenager Christian Pulisic

with the 129th clean sheet of his career as Real Salt Lake draw 0-0 with Sporting Kansas City.

## Monday October 17

**FRANCE:** American businessman Frank McCourt completes his purchase of Marseille for a reported €45m and tells *L'Equipe* that he plans to invest €200m in the club over the next four years.
**GERMANY:** Valerien Ismael takes temporary control of Wolfsburg after coach Dieter Hecking leaves by mutual consent.
**SPAIN:** Osasuna recover from going a goal down after 19 seconds to claim their first La Liga win of the season with a 3-2 victory at Eibar.

## Tuesday October 18

**ENGLAND:** Manchester City, who were hit with UEFA sanctions over their finances in 2014, announce a profit of £20.5m on record revenues of £391.8m for the most recent accounting period.
**RUSSIA:** CSKA Moscow goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev comes within three minutes of his first Champions League clean sheet since November 2006 – a run of 40 games – as Monaco's late goal gives them a 1-1 draw in the Russian capital.
**UAE:** Al Ain reach their first AFC Champions League Final since 2005 as a 2-2 draw with El Jaish in Qatar gives them a 5-3 aggregate victory.

Going through... Jeonbuk Motors' Kim Shin-wook tackles Go Yo-han of Seoul

## Wednesday October 19

**ITALY:** Pepe Reina makes his 150th UEFA club appearance but ends up on the losing side as Napoli are beaten 3-2 at home by Besiktas of Turkey in the Champions League.
**RUSSIA:** Rostov lose at home for the first time in 27 games, going down 1-0 to Atletico Madrid in the Champions League.
**SOUTH KOREA:** Despite losing 2-1 away to Seoul, Jeonbuk Motors win 5-3 on aggregate in their AFC Champions League semi-final.

## Thursday October 20

**ITALY:** Francesco Totti makes his 100th UEFA club competition appearance as Roma draw 3-3 with Austria Vienna in the Europa League.
**SPAIN:** Atletico Madrid will not ➤

Painful...Mexico's Paul Aguilar (in white) and Arturo Vidal of Chile clash in the Copa America

Pressure...Juan Carlos Osorio

of forward Christian Pulisic – who, at 17, has earned a starting spot with Borussia Dortmund in the Bundesliga – is a definite positive.

Nevertheless, defeat in Columbus would be as devastating for the USA as it would for Mexico, so the stakes are high for both in the CONCACAF Classic.

Although Mexico and the United States always steal the headlines, Costa Rica are probably the best side in north and central America at present. With a solid base consisting of Europe-based stars Keylor Navas, Bryan Ruiz, Celso Borges and Joel Campbell, the *Tico*s won 4-3 away to World Cup hosts Russia in their last friendly.

Their first match in the Hexagonal will be in Port of Spain against the team that, in principle, is likely to be the weakest in the group, Trinidad & Tobago. However, the Soca Warriors won't be pushovers as the vast majority of their side have solid careers in MLS.

The remaining opening game brings together two teams that seem to be going in completely different directions. Honduras have struggled to find replacements for the core of a squad that reached two consecutive World Cups. Panama, meanwhile, want to put a history of near-misses behind them and finally qualify for a major tournament. WS

## CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Mexican clubs have won the last 11 continental competitions, and Liga MX is guaranteed at least one semi-finalist this time as Tigres and Pumas meet in the last eight. The winners will face Vancouver Whitecaps, who are top seeds after the group phase, or New York Red Bulls. A third Mexican side, Pachuca, play Costa Rica's Saprissa in the other half of the draw and could meet either Arabe Unido of Panama or MLS side Dallas for a place in the Final

● **QUARTER-FINALS (Feb 21-23 & Feb 28-Mar 2)**
New York Red Bulls (USA) v Vancouver Whitecaps (Can)
Dallas (USA) v Arabe Unido (Pan)
Saprissa (CR) v Pachuca (Mex)
Tigres (Mex) v Pumas (Mex)

● **SEMI-FINALS (Mar 14–16 & Apr 4–6)**
● **FINALS (Apr 19 & 26)**

➤ sign players in January after agreeing to waive their right to suspend a FIFA transfer ban while appealing a two-window suspension on registering new players.
**UEFA:** Newly-elected UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin says "it might be an idea" when asked about playing the Champions League Final outside of Europe, admitting that "to go from Portugal to Azerbaijan, for example, is almost the same or the same as if you go to New York".

### Friday October 21

**SPAIN:** Neymar signs a new contract that ties him to Barcelona until 2021 and reportedly increases his release clause to €200m, rising to €250m for the final three years of the deal.

### Saturday October 22

**ITALY:** Juventus stay top despite losing 1-0 at Milan to a goal from teenager Manuel Locatelli, who is making only his second Serie A start.
**SPAIN:** Lionel Messi scores an injury-time penalty as Barcelona come from 2-1 down to beat Valencia 3-2.
**SWITZERLAND:** Davide Calla's 88th-minute penalty preserves Basle's unbeaten league record as they draw 2-2 at Lugano.

### Sunday October 23

**CHINA:** Guangzhou Evergrande claim a record sixth consecutive Chinese Super League title with a 1-1 draw against Yanbian Funde.
**ENGLAND:** Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho is beaten 4-0 on his return to Chelsea. Manchester City are held at home in a 1-1 draw by Southampton but remain top of the Premier League on goal difference.
**FRANCE:** Three days after taking charge of Marseille, Rudi Garcia steers his new side to a 0-0 draw at Paris Saint-Germain. Normally a winger, Alassane Plea replaces the suspended Mario Balotelli in an attacking role for Nice and scores a hat-trick in a 4-2 win at Metz.
**GERMANY:** Schalke climb out of the relegation zone with a 3-0 victory over Mainz.
**HOLLAND:** Feyenoord drop points for the first time this season, but Dirk Kuyt scores a late equaliser to snatch a 1-1 draw with arch-rivals Ajax.
**REP OF IRELAND:** Dundalk claim a third successive league title with a 2-1 victory over Bohemians.
**SCOTLAND:** Celtic beat Glasgow rivals Rangers 1-0 and will now meet Aberdeen in the Scottish League Cup Final.
**SOUTH AFRICA:** Despite losing 1-0 to Zamalek in Egypt, Mamelodi Sundowns win the CAF ➤

## Bangladesh

STEVE MENARY

# Going backwards

## Qualifying campaign ends in disappointment again

For the eighth time since the start of last year, Bangladesh's national team have no coach. Brought in on a three-month contract to oversee their slim chances of qualification for the 2019 Asian Cup via a play-off with Bhutan, Tom Saintfiet returned to Belgium after a goalless draw in Dhaka and a 3-1 loss in the return.

"The criticism was of the federation not the coach, which is unique," says the well-travelled Saintfiet, who has managed across Asia and Africa. "Bhutan is climbing but Bangladesh is going backwards at club and international level.

"It's a shame as the president is a good guy. Some presidents, you know they just fill their pockets, but not this guy. But too many people are involved."

The Belgian was brought in by Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin and followed in the footsteps of two local coaches, an Italian (Fabio Lopez), a Spaniard (Gonzalo Sanchez Moren) and Lodewijk De Kruif from Holland, who held the post on three separate occasions.

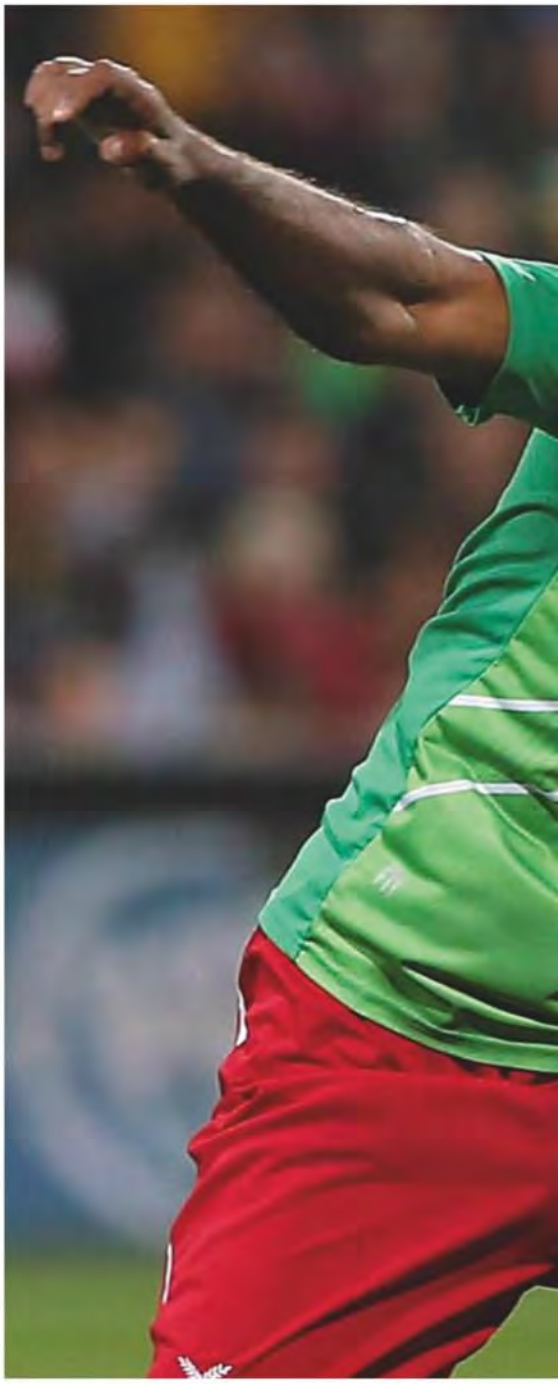
De Kruif, who took the team to the Final of the 2015 Bangabandhu Cup, took charge for the 2018 World Cup qualifiers but ended up leaving his post twice, explaining: "I left the first time because of financial problems. After those problems, Mr Salahuddin asked me to return several times."

All this change was not conducive to a settled team argues the side's German goalkeeping coach Christian Schweichler, who says: "Different football philosophies and tactical plans within a short time confused the young and inexperienced players."

A point against Tajikistan was Bangladesh's only return from eight qualifying matches, which is poor – particularly for club owners who backed the BFF's new Premier League.

The Dhaka League was the country's top competition but, in a cricket-mad country, games were not well attended. So, in 2012, the BFF launched the Premier League with 12 teams across the country.

Club owners responded with significant investment and local players can earn up to $6,000 a month, with overseas players on $10,000 a month, in a country where workers in the booming garment industry get $50 a month.



"It's ridiculous if you compare it with the standard of players in Belgium or in Scandinavia or Eastern Europe," sighs Saintfiet. "Many of these players earn more than a small club in the Belgian Premier League. In one month, these players earn more than most people earn in a year. There are no bonuses and they get paid in advance. There is no motivation. Players in Bangladesh are happy to stay in Bangladesh. They don't want to go overseas."

Jamal Bhuyan played in Denmark, but he was born there and only came to Bangladesh after being recruited by De Kruif. In 2014, the midfielder became the highest-paid Bangladeshi player of all time when he signed for Dhaka-based Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi, before moving to Sheikh Russell this year.

National captain Mamunul Islam had an

Big earner...Jamal Bhuyan

unsuccessful spell in India with Atletico de Kolkata. And after being omitted from the Bhutan game, he has quit the national team, which is also suffering from the influx of highly paid overseas players.

Saintfiet explains: "All the strikers are from Cameroon and Nigeria. They earn good money but are not a very good standard. The local strikers don't really play in the local league. The clubs also have two foreign central defenders so foreign strikers play against foreign central defenders. There is no international competition."

As for the national job, Saintfiet admits: "The federation want to talk to me, but to go back and do the same thing does not make sense.

"There are no qualifiers for three years. They need to start again so in the next qualifiers they have a whole new generation of players." WS

Gone...Mamunul Islam (left) has now quit the national team

➤ Champions League 3-1 on aggregate.

**SPAIN:** Atletico Madrid lose 1-0 at Sevilla – their first defeat in any competition this season – which allows Real Madrid to go top with a 2-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao.

**USA:** A goalless draw at LA Galaxy is enough for Dallas to win the MLS Supporters' Shield for the team with the best regular-season record.

## Monday October 24

**PORTUGAL:** Renato Sanches of Bayern Munich and Portugal wins the European Golden Boy award for the most impressive under-21 player of the year. Lionel Messi was the winner in 2005, but Cristiano Ronaldo never claimed the prize.

## Tuesday October 25

**BRAZIL:** Captain of the 1970 World Cup-winning side, Carlos Alberto dies in Rio de Janeiro following a heart attack at the age of 72.

**GERMANY:** Bayer Leverkusen are knocked out of the German Cup by third-tier Sportfreunde Lotte, who win on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

**ITALY:** Juventus general manager Giuseppe Marotta claims Paul Pogba's agent, Mino Raiola, earned €27m from his client's world-record €105m move to Manchester United in the summer. Milan fail to top Serie A for the first time since March 2012 as they lose 3-0 at Genoa.

**SPAIN:** FIFA fines the Royal Spanish Football Federation 220,000 Swiss francs for violating youth-player transfer rules in the case involving Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid.

## Wednesday October 26

**ENGLAND:** Manchester United beat Manchester City 1-0 in the League Cup to make it six games without a win for Pep Guardiola – the worst run of his coaching career.

**ITALY:** Pescara's Serie A game at home to Atalanta is suspended for two minutes in the first half as tremors are felt following an earthquake in central Italy. When play resumes, the visitors win 1-0.

**KAZAKHSTAN:** Astana draw 0-0 with Okzhetpes to clinched a third successive league title with a game to spare.

**UKRAINE:** Dnipro are deducted six points in the Ukrainian Premier league for failing to clear their debts with former coach Juande Ramos and his assistants.

**USA:** LA Galaxy and Toronto go through to their conference semi-finals in the MLS Cup with 3-1 victories against Real Salt Lake and Philadelphia Union respectively. WS

# Internationals

## 2018 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

## AFRICA section

● *5 finals places available*

### 3rd round

#### Group A

*Oct 8 - Kinshasa*
**DR Congo 4** (Mbokani 6, 56, Bolingi 45+2, Mubele 69)
**Libya 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Ref:** Keita (Mli)
**DR Congo:** Matampi - Mpeko, Tisserand, Zakuani, Lomalisa, Botaka (Mubele 43), Mbemba, Maghoma, Bolasie, Bolingi (Bakambu 77), Mbokani (Bompunga 66).
**Libya:** K Al Warfali - Dallah, Sabbou, Ahwedi, Al Gadi (Al Triki 46), Ghanudi, Mounir (Soula 46), S Al Warfali, Almoatasembellah (Al Borki 64), Elhouni, Al Badri.

*Oct 9 - Monastir*
**Tunisia 2** (Abdennour 59, Ben-Hatira 80)
**Guinea 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Ref:** Nkurunziza (Bdi)
**Tunisia:** A Mathlouthi - Nagguez, Maaloul, Abdennour, Mohsni, Dhaouadi, Lahmar, Ben Amor, Oueslati (Ben-Hatira 72), Khazri (Ben Khemis 90+1), Harbaoui (Akaichi 65).
**Guinea:** N Yattara - Alseny Bangoura, F Camara, S Conde, Issiaga Sylla, N Keita, I Soumah (Landel 81), S Diallo, Alhassane Bangoura (Kamano 81), Idrissa Sylla (M Yattara 58), Traore.

**WC QUALS – AFRICA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP A**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DR Congo | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| Tunisia | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Guinea | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Libya | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |

#### Group B

*Oct 9 - Blida*
**Algeria 1** (Soudani 7)
**Cameroon 1** (Moukandjo 23)
**HT:** 1-1. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
**Algeria:** M'Bolhi - Zeffane, Medjani, Cadamuro, Ghoulam, Taider, Guedioura, Boudebouz (Brahimi 56), Mahrez (Feghouli 88), Slimani, Soudani (Ghezzal 77).
**Cameroon:** Ondoa - Nyom, Chedjou, N'Koulou, Oyongo, Salli (Ndi 83), Ngadeu, Toko Ekambi, Djoum (Siani 69), Aboubakar, Moukandjo.

*Oct 9 - Ndola*
**Zambia 1** (Mbesuma 71)
**Nigeria 2** (Iwobi 33, Iheanacho 43)
**HT:** 0-2. **Ref:** Grisha (Egy)
**Zambia:** Mweene - Chongo, Kapumbu, A Chama (Mtonga 48), Sunzu, Sinkala, Kalaba, F Tembo (Kola 82), Lungu, Mbesuma, Kalengo (Mwanza 56).
**Nigeria:** Ikeme - Echiejile, Omeruo, Troost-Ekong, Ideye (Esiti 73), Mikel, Simon (A Musa 83), Iheanacho, Onazi (Shehu 90+2), Iwobi, Ndidi.

**WC QUALS – AFRICA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP B**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nigeria | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Cameroon | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Algeria | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Zambia | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |

#### Group C

*Oct 8 - Franceville*
**Gabon 0**
**Morocco 0**
**Ref:** Nampiandraza (Mad)
**Gabon:** Ovono - Biyogo Poko, Appindangoye, Ecuele Manga, Obiang, D Ndong (Madinda 76), Lemina, Tandjigora, Kanga, Aubameyang, Evouna (Meye 89).
**Morocco:** El Kajoui - Ait Bennasser, Lazaar (Mendyl 87), Da Costa, Saiss, El Ahmadi, Belhanda (Alioui 79), Boussoufa, Amrabat, Tannane, El Arabi (En-Nesyri 46).

*Oct 8 - Bouake*
**Ivory Coast 3** (Kodjia 26, S Coulibaly og 31, Gervinho 34)
**Mali 1** (S Yatabare 18)
**HT:** 3-1. **Ref:** Bondo (Bot)
**Ivory Coast:** Gbohouo - Aurier, Bailly, Kone, Kanon, Serey Die (Doukoure 76), Kessie, Seri, Gradel (Sio 73), Gervinho (Bony 83), Kodjia.
**Mali:** O Sissoko - H Traore, S Coulibaly, Wague, Kone, Sylla, S Yatabare, L Coulibaly, M Doumbia (Samassekou 20; Sow 73), Marega, M Yatabare (Maiga 64).

**WC QUALS – AFRICA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP C**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ivory Coast | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Gabon | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Morocco | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Mali | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

#### Group D

*Oct 8 - Ouagadougou*
**Burkina Faso 1** (Diawara 90+1)
**South Africa 1** (Furman 80)
**HT:** 0-0. **Ref:** Jiyed (Mor)
**Burkina Faso:** Koffi - C Kabore (Guira 82), B Kone, Dayo, Yago, Malo, Pitroipa (Bance 84), B Traore (Diawara 75), Abdou Razack Traore, Nakoulma, Alain Traore.
**South Africa:** Khune - Mphahlele, Matlaba, Mathoho, Hlatshwayo, Kekana (Mahlangu 74), Makola, Furman, Rodgers, Serero (Mobara 86), Dolly (Manyisa 66).

*Oct 8 - Dakar*
**Senegal 2** (Keita 24, Sow 80)
**Cape Verde Islands 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Ref:** Essrayri (Tun)
**Senegal:** Diallo - Ciss, Koulibaly, Mbodj, Gassama, Kouyate (Diop 82), Gueye, S Mane, Diame (C N'Doye 61), Keita, Konate (Sow 76).
**Cape Verde:** Vozinha - Carlitos, Fernando Varela, Ricardo, Kay (Nuno Rocha 38), Stopira, Odair Fortes (Garry Rodrigues 46), Marco Soares (Kuca 78), Semedo, Heldon, Ze Luis.

**WC QUALS – AFRICA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP D**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Senegal | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| South Africa | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Burkina Faso | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Cape Verde Is | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

#### Group E

*Oct 7 - Tamale*
**Ghana 0**
**Uganda 0**
**Ref:** Mohamed (Sud)
**Ghana:** Brimah - Afful, Amartey, Boye, Rahman, Acquah (Agyemang-Badu 57), Acheampong (Schlupp 78), Wakaso, Atsu (Waris 82), J Ayew, Gyan.
**Uganda:** Onyango - Wadada (Wasswa 62), Ochaya, Juuko, Isinde, Aucho, Iguma, Oloya (Walusimbi 75), Luwagga, Mawejje (Massa 59), Miya.

*Oct 9 - Brazzaville*
**Congo 1** (Dore 24)
**Egypt 2** (M Salah 41, El Said 58)
**HT:** 1-1. **Ref:** Dembele (IvC)
**Congo:** Mouyabi - Baudry, Moubhio, Bakoua, Itoua (Epako 46; Ibara 85), Imouele, Massengo, Tsiba (Delarge 77), Dore, Bifouma, Ondama.
**Egypt:** El Hadary - Gaber, Gabr, Gamal, Abdel-Shafy, Hamed, El Nenny, El Said, Trezeguet (Sobhy 79), M Salah, B Morsy (Koka 71).

**WC QUALS – AFRICA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP E**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Egypt | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Ghana | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Uganda | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Congo | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |

*Each team will play 6 games (3x2); games to be completed by Nov 2017*

● *The 5 group winners will qualify for the finals*

## ASIA section

● *4.5 finals places available*

### 3rd round

#### Group A

*Oct 6 - Xian*
**China 0**
**Syria 1** (Al Mawas 54)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 37,368. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)
**China:** Gu Chao - Zhao Mingjian, Zhang Linpeng, Feng Xiaoting, Ren Hang, Yu Hai (Yang Xu 64), Huang Bowen (Jiang Zhipeng 46), Hao Junmin, Zhang Xizhe, Zhang Yuning (Wu Lei 57), Gao Lin.
**Syria:** Alma - Al Shbli, O Midani, Al Salih, Ajan, Al Mawas, Haj Mohamad, Mobayed, Kalfa (Jenyat 68), Khribin (Al Hussain 81), Mohtadi (Al Douni 48).

*Oct 6 - Suwon*
**South Korea 3** (Ki Sung-yueng 11, Ji Dong-won 56, Son Heung-min 58)
**Qatar 2** (Al Haidos pen 16, Soria 45)
**HT:** 1-2. **Att:** 32,550. **Ref:** Bin Yaacob (Mly)
**South Korea:** Kim Seung-gyu - Kim Kee-hee, Jang Hyun-soo, Hong Chul, Suk Hyun-jun (Kim Shin-wook 46), Hong Jeong-ho, Jung Woo-young, Ki Sung-yueng, Koo Ja-cheol (Kwak Tae-hwi 71), Son Heung-min (Kim Bo-kyung 89), Ji Dong-won. *Sent off: Hong Jeong-ho 66.*
**Qatar:** Al Sheeb - Khoukhi, Hassan (Majid 64), Yasser, Pedro Miguel, Tabata, El Sayed (Boudiaf 64), Luiz Martin, Kasola (Afif 80), Al Haidos, Soria.

*Oct 6 - Tashkent*
**Uzbekistan 0**
**Iran 1** (Hosseini 27)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 34,000. **Ref:** Williams (Aus)
**Uzbekistan:** Lobanov - Ismailov, Denisov, Tukhtakhodjaev, Krimets, Shukurov, Haydarov, Djeparov (Geynrikh 40), Rashidov (Masharipov 61), Shomurodov, Sergeev (Bikmaev 73).
**Iran:** Beiranvand - Rezaeian, Mohammadi, Hosseini, Ezatolahi, Amiri, Pouraliganji, Shojaei (Teymourian 83), Hajsafi, Taremi (Jahanbakhsh 76), Ghoochannejhad (Azmoun 63).

*Oct11 - Tehran*
**Iran 1** (Azmoun 25)
**South Korea 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 75,800. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
**Iran:** Beiranvand - Rezaeian, Mohammadi, Hosseini, Pouraliganji, Dejagah, Amiri, Ezatolahi, Hajsafi, Azmoun (Teymourian 85), Jahanbakhsh (Taremi 82).
**South Korea:** Kim Seung-gyu - Oh Jae-suk, Kim Kee-hee, Kwak Tae-hwi, Son Heung-min, Kim Bo-kyung (Koo Ja-cheol 76), Ji Dong-won, Han Kook-young (Hong Chul 46), Ki Sung-yueng, Lee Chung-yong (Kim Shin-wook 67), Jang Hyun-soo.

*Oct11 - Doha*
**Qatar 1** (Al Haidos pen 38)
**Syria 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 9,940. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)
**Qatar:** Al Sheeb - Majid, Khoukhi, Yasser, Pedro Miguel, Kasola, Assadalla (Tabata 77), Luiz Martin (El Sayed 67), Al Haidos, Afif (Boudiaf 60), Soria.
**Syria:** Alma - Al Shbli, Al Salih, Ajan, Z Midani, Mobayed (Mohtadi 64), O Midani, Al Mawas, Kalfa (Omari 53), Haj Mohamad, Khribin.

*Oct11 - Tashkent*
**Uzbekistan 2** (Bikmaev 50, Shukurov 85)
**China 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 21,503. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)
**Uzbekistan:** Lobanov - Khashimov, Krimets, Tukhtakhodjaev, Denisov, Haydarov, Bikmaev (Shukurov 64), Djeparov, O Akhmedov (Masharipov 81), Shomurodov (Rashidov 90+1), Sergeev.
**China:** Yang Zhi - Zhao Mingjian, Feng Xiaoting, Du Wei, Ren Hang, Cai Huikang, Hao Junmin, Zhang Chengdong, Jiang Ning (Huang Bowen 69), Sun Ke (Jiang Zhipeng 18; Zhang Yuning 54), Wu Lei.

**WC QUALS – ASIA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP A**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iran | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 10 |
| Uzbekistan | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| South Korea | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Syria | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Qatar | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| China | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 |

#### Group B

*Oct 6 - Saitama*
**Japan 2** (Haraguchi 26, Yamaguchi 90+5)
**Iraq 1** (Abdul-Amir 60)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 57,768. **Ref:** Kim Dong-jin (SKo)
**Japan:** Nishikawa - Morishige, H Sakai, G Sakai, Yoshida, Honda (Yu Kobayashi 81), Kashiwagi (Yamaguchi 67), Kiyotake, Hasebe, Haraguchi, Okazaki (Asano 75).
**Iraq:** Hameed - Ibrahim, Adnan, Natiq, Ismail, Salem, Abdul-Zahra, Yasin (Resan 83), Attwan (Kamel 53), Abdul-Amir, Abdul-Raheem (J Mohammed 69).

*Oct 6 - Jeddah*
**Saudi Arabia 2** (Al Jassim 5, Al Shamrani 79)
**Australia 2** (Sainsbury 45, Juric 71)
**HT:** 1-1. **Att:** 51,616. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
**Saudi Arabia:** Al Mosailem - Fallatah, Osama Hawsawi, Omar Hawsawi (M Hawsawi 70), Al Harbi, Al Khaibri, Al Faraj, Al Shehri (Al Muwallad 67), Al Jassim, Al Abed, Hazazi (Al Shamrani 54).
**Australia:** Ryan - Milligan, Spiranovic, Smith, Sainsbury, Mooy, Rogic (Irvine 85), Leckie (Luongo 61), Jedinak, Kruse, Juric (Cahill 85).

*Oct 6 - Abu Dhabi*
**United Arab Emirates 3** (Mabkhout 14, 47, Khalil 90+3)
**Thailand 1** (Tana 65)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 18,242. **Ref:** Liu (HK)
**UAE:** Naser - Salem, I Ahmed, S Saleh (Al Fardan 63), Fawzi (Hussain 83), Sanqour, Al Hammadi (Khalil 75), O Abdulrahman, T Ahmed, Esmaeel, Mabkhout.
**Thailand:** Kawin - Tristan, Theerathon, Koravit, Sarach, Kroekrit (Siroch 52), Tanaboon (Pratum 46), Chanathip, Mongkol (Tana 64), Pokklaw, Teerasil.

*Oct11 - Melbourne*
**Australia 1** (Jedinak pen 52)
**Japan 1** (Haraguchi 5)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 48,460. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)
**Australia:** Ryan - Smith, Spiranovic, McGowan, Sainsbury, Mooy (Leckie 82), Rogic, Jedinak, Luongo, Juric (Cahill 70), Giannou (Kruse 58).
**Japan:** Nishikawa - G Sakai, Morishige, Yoshida, Makino, Yamaguchi, Yu Kobayashi (Kiyotake 81), Hasebe, Kagawa, Haraguchi (Maruyama 90+1), Honda (Asano 84).

*Oct11 - Tehran, Iran*
**Iraq 4** (Abdul-Raheem 7, 25, 87, 90+4)
**Thailand 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 2,255. **Ref:** Ma (Chn)
**Iraq:** Hameed - Ibrahim, Salem (Mhawi 66), Adnan, Ismail, Kamel, Nadhim, Abdul-Amir, Abdul-Zahra (Attwan 62), Yasin (Shokan 78), Abdul-Raheem.
**Thailand:** Kawin - Tristan, Theerathon, Koravit, Kroekrit (Tana 46), Mongkol (Siroch 28), Sarach, Tanaboon (Pratum 32), Chanathip, Pokklaw, Teerasil. *Sent off: Koravit 70.*

*Oct11 - Jeddah*
**Saudi Arabia 3** (Al Muwallad 73, Al Abed 79, Al Shehri 90+2)
**United Arab Emirates 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 60,102. **Ref:** Kim Jong-hyeok (SKo)
**Saudi Arabia:** Al Mosailem - Fallatah, Omar Hawsawi, Osama Hawsawi, Al Shamrani (Al Muwallad 66), Al Harbi, Al Shehri, Al Faraj, Al Khaibri, Al Jassim (M Hawsawi 90+3), Al Abed (Hazazi 86).
**UAE:** Naser - Salem, Hussain, T Ahmed (Al Fardan 72), I Ahmed, Sanqour, O Abdulrahman, Al Hammadi, Esmaeel (Al Kathiri 81), Mabkhout, Khalil (Ibrahim 58).

**WC QUALS – ASIA – 3RD ROUND: GROUP B**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saudi Arabia | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 10 |
| Australia | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Japan | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| UAE | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Iraq | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 3 |
| Thailand | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 10 | 0 |

*Each team will play10 games (5x2); games to be completed by Sep 2017*

● *The top 2 in both groups will qualify for the finals; the 2 3rd-placed countries will meet in the* **Asia section play-off**, *the winner of which will meet the 4th-placed CONCACAF country in a play-off for a place in the finals*

## EUROPE section

● *13 finals places available (excluding the place for hosts* **Russia***, who qualify automatically)*

### Group A

*Oct 7 - Paris*
**France 4** (Gameiro 23, 59, Payet 26, Griezmann 38)
**Bulgaria 1** (M Aleksandrov pen 6)
**HT:** 3-1. **Att:** 65,475. **Ref:** Banti (Ita)
**France:** Lloris - Sagna (Sidibe 27), Varane, Koscielny, Kurzawa, Pogba, Matuidi, Sissoko, Griezmann (Fekir 83), Payet, Gameiro (Gignac 72).
**Bulgaria:** V Stoyanov - S Popov, A Aleksandrov, Pirgov, Z Milanov, G Milanov, Dyakov, Kostadinov, M Aleksandrov (Nedelev 76), Marcelinho (Rangelov 62), I Popov (Tonev 68).

*Oct 7 - Rotterdam*
**Holland 4** (Promes 15, 31, Klaassen 56, Janssen 64)
**Belarus 1** (Rios 47)
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 41,200. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
**Holland:** Stekelenburg - Karsdorp, Van Dijk, Bruma, Blind, Strootman (Clasie 79), Wijnaldum, Promes, Klaassen, Sneijder (Propper 46), Janssen (Dost 83).
**Belarus:** Gorbunov - Polyakov, Sivakov, Politevich, Bordachev, Gordeichuk (Volodko 74), Maevski (Hleb 46), Krivets (Kislyak 67), Korzun, Rios, Kornilenko.

*Oct 7 - Luxembourg*
**Luxembourg 0**
**Sweden 1** (Lustig 58)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 5,057. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
**Luxembourg:** Moris - Jans, Philipps, Malget, Carlson, V Thill (Turpel 67), C Martins, Bohnert, Mutsch, Deville (Da Mota 67), Joachim. *Sent off: Malget 82.*
**Sweden:** Olsen - Lustig, Lindelof, Granqvist, M Olsson, Durmaz (Nyman 89), Hiljemark, Ekdal (Fransson 80), Forsberg, Guidetti (Toivonen 71), Berg.

*Oct10 - Borisov*
**Belarus 1** (Savitski 80)
**Luxembourg 1** (Joachim 85)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 9,011. **Ref:** Welz (Ger)
**Belarus:** Gorbunov - Polyakov, Martynovich, Filipenko, Bordachev (Volodko 78), Kalachev, Hleb, Korzun, Maevski (Savitski 71), Gordeichuk, Signevich (Kornilenko 61).
**Luxembourg:** Moris - Jans, Delgado, C Martins (Veiga 35), Carlson, Bohnert (Turpel 72), Mutsch, V Thill (Janisch 46), Philipps, Da Mota, Joachim. *Sent off: Carlson 44.*

*Oct10 - Amsterdam*
**Holland 0**
**France 1** (Pogba 30)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 50,220. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
**Holland:** Stekelenburg - Karsdorp, Bruma, Van Dijk, Blind, Strootman, Wijnaldum (Dost 62), Promes (Depay 16), Propper (Willems 84), Klaassen, Janssen.
**France:** Lloris - Sidibe, Varane, Koscielny, Kurzawa, Pogba, Matuidi, Sissoko, Griezmann (Kante 90+3), Payet (Martial 67), Gameiro (Gignac 79).

*Oct10 - Stockholm*
**Sweden 3** (Toivonen 39, Hiljemark 45, Lindelof 58)
**Bulgaria 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 21,777. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
**Sweden:** Olsen - Krafth, Lindelof, Granqvist, M Olsson (Augustinsson 63), Durmaz, Hiljemark, Ekdal, Forsberg (Wendt 74), Berg (Guidetti 86), Toivonen.
**Bulgaria:** V Stoyanov - S Popov, A Aleksandrov, Bozhikov, Nedyalkov, Kostadinov (M Aleksandrov 53), Slavchev (Raynov 89), Dyakov, Chochev (Marcelinho 72), G Milanov, I Popov.

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP A**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sweden | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| France | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| Holland | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Bulgaria | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 10 | 3 |
| Belarus | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Luxembourg | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 |

### Group B

*Oct 7 - Budapest*
**Hungary 2** (Szalai 53, 71)
**Switzerland 3** (Seferovic 51, Rodriguez 67, Stocker 89)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 21,668. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
**Hungary:** Gulacsi - Fiola, Guzmics, Lang, Kadar, Dzsudzsak, Nagy, Kleinheisler (Nemeth 76), Gera, Stieber, Szalai (Nikolic 87).
**Switzerland:** Sommer - Lichtsteiner, Schar, Elvedi, Rodriguez, Embolo, Behrami, Shaqiri (G Fernandes 81), Dzemaili, Mehmedi (Stocker 88), Seferovic (Derdiyok 72).

*Oct 7 - Riga*
**Latvia 0**
**Faroe Islands 2** (Nattestad 19, Edmundsson 70)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 4,823. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
**Latvia:** Vanins - Gabovs, Jagodinskis, Gorkss, Maksimenko, A Visnakovs, Kluskins (Zjuzins 72), O Laizans, Lukjanovs (D Ikaunieks 76), Gutkovskis (Karlsons 64), Sabala.
**Faroe Islands:** Nielsen - Naes, Nattestad, Gregersen, V Davidsen, Vatnhamar, Hendriksson (P Justinussen 88), Benjaminsen, Hansson, R Joensen (Sorensen 73), Edmundsson (Klettskard 90+2).

*Oct 7 - Aveiro*
**Portugal 6** (Cristiano Ronaldo 2, 4, 47, 68, Joao Cancelo 44, Andre Silva 86)
**Andorra 0**
**HT:** 3-0. **Att:** 25,120. **Ref:** Drachta (Aut)
**Portugal:** Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Jose Fonte, Pepe (Gelson Martins 72), Raphael Guerreiro (Antunes 52), Quaresma, Andre Gomes (Joao Mario 66), Joao Moutinho, Bernardo Silva, Cristiano Ronaldo, Andre Silva.
**Andorra:** Gomes - Jordi Rubio, Lima, Vales, Llovera, M Garcia (San Nicolas 49), Rodriguez, M Vieira, Rebes, C Martinez (Moreira 76), Alaez (Pujol 73). *Sent off: Jordi Rubio 62, Rebes 71.*

*Oct10 - Andorra La Vella*
**Andorra 1** (A Martinez 90+1)
**Switzerland 2** (Schar pen 19, Mehmedi 77)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 2,014. **Ref:** Beaton (Sco)
**Andorra:** Gomes - Jesus Rubio, E Garcia, Lima, Llovera, San Nicolas, Rodriguez, Vales, Clemente (A Martinez 73), M Vieira (C Martinez 80), Pujol (Riera 84).
**Switzerland:** Burki - Lang, Schar, Klose (Elvedi 46), Rodriguez, G Fernandes (Zakaria 66), Xhaka, Shaqiri (Stocker 80), Embolo, Mehmedi, Seferovic.

*Oct10 - Torshavn*
**Faroe Islands 0**
**Portugal 6** (Andre Silva 12, 22, 37, Cristiano Ronaldo 65, Joao Moutinho 90+1, Joao Cancelo 90+3)
**HT:** 0-3. **Att:** 4,780. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
**Faroe Islands:** Nielsen - B Hansen, Gregersen (J Davidsen 72), Nattestad, V Davidsen, Vatnhamar, Benjaminsen, Hansson, Sorensen (R Joensen 66), Hendriksson (Bartalsstovu 80), Edmundsson.
**Portugal:** Rui Patricio - Joao Cancelo, Jose Fonte, Pepe, Antunes, Quaresma (Gelson Martins 67), Andre Gomes, William Carvalho, Joao Mario (Joao Moutinho 81), Cristiano Ronaldo, Andre Silva (Eder 80).

*Oct10 - Riga*
**Latvia 0**
**Hungary 2** (Gyurcso 10, Szalai 77)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 4,715. **Ref:** Gil (Pol)
**Latvia:** Vanins - Gabovs, Jagodinskis, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Tarasovs, A Visnakovs (Zjuzins 57), Kluskins (J Ikaunieks 68), O Laizans (Karasausks 78), D Ikaunieks, Sabala.
**Hungary:** Gulacsi - Bese, Guzmics, Kadar, Korhut, Gyurcso, Gera (Vida 83), Nagy, Dzsudzsak, Szalai, Nikolic (Kleinheisler 46).

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP B**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Switzerland | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 9 |
| Portugal | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 2 | 6 |
| Hungary | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Faroe Islands | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Latvia | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Andorra | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 |

### Group C

*Oct 8 - Baku*
**Azerbaijan 1** (Medvedev 11)
**Norway 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Liany (Isr)
**Azerbaijan:** K Agayev - Mirzabekov, Medvedev, R F Sadygov, Dashdemirov, Eddy (Alaskarov 65), Garayev, Amirguliyev, R Kurbanov (Sheydaev 80), Ramazanov (B Huseynov 90), Nazarov.
**Norway:** Jarstein - Svensson, Strandberg, Hovland, Aleesami, Helland (Berget 71), Skjelbred (Johansen 84), Selnaes, Diomande, King (Sorloth 61), Henriksen.

*Oct 8 - Hamburg*
**Germany 3** (Muller 13, 65, Kroos 49)
**Czech Republic 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 51,299. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
**Germany:** Neuer - Kimmich, Boateng, Hummels, Hector (Howedes 68), Kroos (Gundogan 76), Khedira, Muller, Ozil, Draxler (Brandt 80), Gotze.
**Czech Republic:** Vaclik - Kaderabek, Sivok, Suchy, Novak, Petrzela (Skalak 69), Horava, Pavelka (Droppa 63), Krejci, Dockal, Vydra (V Kadlec 77).

*Oct 8 - Belfast*
**Northern Ireland 4** (Davis pen 26, K Lafferty 79, 90+4, Ward 85)
**San Marino 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 18,234. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
**Northern Ireland:** McGovern - C McLaughlin (McNair 77), J Evans, McAuley, Ferguson, McGinn, Davis, Norwood, Dallas (Washington 65), Ward, Magennis (K Lafferty 73).
**San Marino:** A Simoncini - M Berardi, F Vitaioli, D Simoncini, Alessandro Della Valle, Palazzi, Hirsch (Cesarini 56), Tosi, Coppini (E Golinucci 71), M Vitaioli, Stefanelli (Zafferani 88). *Sent off: Palazzi 49.*

*Oct11 - Ostrava*
**Czech Republic 0**
**Azerbaijan 0**
**Att:** 12,148. **Ref:** Jug (Sln)
**Czech Republic:** Vaclik - Gebre Selassie, Brabec, Sivok, Sykora, Skalak (Zmrhal 74), Droppa, Dockal, Krejci (Petrzela 64), Schick (Skoda 66), V Kadlec.
**Azerbaijan:** K Agayev - Mirzabekov, Medvedev, B Huseynov, Dashdemirov, Garayev, Alaskarov (Ramazanov 71), Amirguliyev, Nazarov, R Kurbanov (Abdullayev 87), Sheydaev (Eddy 90+1).

*Oct11 - Hanover*
**Germany 2** (Draxler 13, Khedira 17)
**Northern Ireland 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 42,132. **Ref:** Tagliavento (Ita)
**Germany:** Neuer - Kimmich, Boateng (Mustafi 69), Hummels, Hector (Volland 81), Khedira, Kroos, Muller, Ozil (Gundogan 46), Draxler, Gotze.
**Northern Ireland:** McGovern - Hodson, Hughes, McAuley, J Evans, Ferguson, Davis, C Evans, Ward (McGinn 61), Norwood (McNair 73), Magennis (K Lafferty 76).

*Oct11 - Oslo*
**Norway 4** (D Simoncini og 12, Diomande 77, Samuelsen 82, King 83)
**San Marino 1** (Stefanelli 54)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 8,214. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)
**Norway:** Jarstein - Svensson, Strandberg, Hovland, Aleesami, Skjelbred, Selnaes, Tettey (Samuelsen 67), Berget (Sorloth 73), Henriksen (Diomande 46), King.
**San Marino:** A Simoncini - Brolli, F Vitaioli, D Simoncini, Alessandro Della Valle, Rinaldi (M Berardi 46), C Valentini (Hirsch 68), Tosi, Mazza, Zafferani, Stefanelli (Selva 82).

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP C**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Germany | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 9 |
| Azerbaijan | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| N Ireland | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Norway | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Czech Rep | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| San Marino | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 |

### Group D

*Oct 6 - Vienna*
**Austria 2** (Arnautovic 28, 48)
**Wales 2** (Allen 22, Wimmer og 45+1)
**HT:** 1-2. **Att:** 44,200. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
**Austria:** Almer (Ozcan 58) - Klein, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Wimmer, Sabitzer, Baumgartlinger, Alaba, Arnautovic (Schaub 87), Junuzovic (Schopf 79), Janko.
**Wales:** Hennessey - Gunter, Chester, B Davies, A Williams, Taylor (Huws 90+1), Ledley, Allen (D Edwards 56), King, Bale, Vokes (Robson-Kanu 77).

*Oct 6 - Chisinau*
**Moldova 0**
**Serbia 3** (Kostic 20, Ivanovic 37, Tadic 59)
**HT:** 0-2. **Att:** 6,192. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
**Moldova:** Cebanu - Racu, Carp, Epureanu, Bolohan, Cojocari, Gatcan, Andronic (Mihaliov 69), Cebotaru (Ginsari 78), Dedov (Sidorenco 63), Bugaiov.
**Serbia:** Stojkovic - Nastasic, Ivanovic, Vukovic (S Mitrovic 70), Rukavina, Gudelj, Milivojevic, Kolarov, Kostic (Z Tosic 70), Pavlovic (Katai 46), Tadic.

*Oct 6 - Dublin*
**Republic of Ireland 1** (Coleman 56)
**Georgia 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 39,793. **Ref:** Chapron (Fra)
**Republic of Ireland:** Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Clark, Ward, McCarthy, Hendrick, Brady (Whelan 80), Walters, Long (O'Shea 90+4), McClean.
**Georgia:** Loria - Kakabadze, Kverkvelia, Kashia, Navalovski (Kobakhidze 89), Daushvili (Kacharava 90+3), Kazaishvili, Gvilia, Okriashvili, Mchedlidze, Ananidze (Skhirtladze 74).

*Oct 9 - Chisinau*
**Moldova 1** (Bugaiov 45+1)
**Republic of Ireland 3** (Long 2, McClean 69, 76)
**HT:** 1-1. **Att:** 6,089. **Ref:** Kehlet (Den)
**Moldova:** Calancea - Bordian, Posmac, Armas (Golovatenco 36), Bolohan, Gatcan, Cojocari, Andronic (Sidorenco 83), Zasavitchi (Cebotaru 61), Dedov, Bugaiov.
**Republic of Ireland:** Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Clark, Ward, Whelan, McCarthy (Meyler 80), Walters, Hoolahan (O'Kane 86), McClean, Long (O'Dowda 63).

*Oct 9 - Belgrade*
**Serbia 3** (A Mitrovic 6, 23, Tadic 74)
**Austria 2** (Sabitzer 16, Janko 62)
**HT:** 2-1. **Att:** 14,200. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
**Serbia:** Stojkovic - Ivanovic, S Mitrovic, Nastasic, Rukavina (Maksimovic 89), Milivojevic, Fejsa, Kolarov, Tadic, A Mitrovic (Gudelj 77), Kostic (Katai 65).
**Austria:** Ozcan - Klein, Dragovic (Prodl 71), Hinteregger, Wimmer, Sabitzer, Baumgartlinger (Ilsanker 58), Junuzovic (Schopf 63), Alaba, Arnautovic, Janko.

*Oct 9 - Cardiff*
**Wales 1** (Bale 10)
**Georgia 1** (Okriashvili 57)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 32,652. **Ref:** Mazzoleni (Ita)
**Wales:** Hennessey - Gunter, Chester, B Davies, A Williams, Taylor (Cotterill 70), King (Robson-Kanu 61), D Edwards, Ledley (Huws 73), Vokes, Bale.
**Georgia:** Loria - Kakabadze, Kverkvelia, Kashia, Navalovski, Ananidze (Kacharava 90+3), Daushvili, Kazaishvili, Gvilia, Okriashvili (Jigauri 90+1), Mchedlidze (Dvalishvili 75).

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP D**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Serbia | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 7 |
| Rep Ireland | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| Wales | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 5 |
| Austria | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| Georgia | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Moldova | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 0 |

### Group E

*Oct 8 - Yerevan*
**Armenia 0**
**Romania 5** (Stancu pen 4, Popa 10, Marin 12, Stanciu 29, Chipciu 60)
**HT:** 0-4. **Att:** 5,500. **Ref:** Bezborodov (Rus)
**Armenia:** Beglaryan - Mkoyan, Haroyan, Andonian (T Voskanyan 39), Hayrapetyan, Grigoryan, Pizzelli, Malakyan, Ozbiliz (Hovhannisyan 64), V Pogosyan (Muradyan 33), Manoyan. *Sent off: Malakyan 3.*
**Romania:** Tatarusanu - Benzar, Sapunaru, D Grigore, Latovlevici, Marin, Stanciu (Bicfalvi 82), Hoban, Popa, Stancu (Keseru 57), Chipciu (Rotariu 67).

*Oct 8 - Podgorica*
**Montenegro 5** (Tomasevic 24, N Vukcevic 59, Jovetic 64, Beciraj 73, Savic 78)
**Kazakhstan 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 8,517. **Ref:** Schorgenhofer (Aut)
**Montenegro:** M Bozovic - Marusic, Savic, Simic, Tomasevic, Scekic (Bakic 83), N Vukcevic (Nikolic 68), Vesovic, Jovetic, Kojasevic, Beciraj (Raicevic 76).
**Kazakhstan:** Pokatilov - Beisebekov, Kislitsyn, Logvinenko, Shomko, Maliy, Kuat (Tagybergen 76), Mukhutdinov, Islamkhan (Muzhikov 64), Nurgaliyev, Khizhnichenko (Murtazayev 85).

*Oct 8 - Warsaw*
**Poland 3** (Lewandowski 20, pen 36, 48)
**Denmark 2** (Glik og 49, Y Poulsen 69)
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 56,811. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
**Poland:** Fabianski - Piszczek, Glik, Cionek, Jedrzejczyk, Krychowiak, Zielinski, Blaszczykowski (Peszko 89), Milik (Linetty 46), Grosicki (Rybus 74), Lewandowski.
**Denmark:** Schmeichel - Kjaer, A Christensen, Vestergaard (Delaney 82), P Ankersen, Kvist, Hojbjerg, Durmisi, Eriksen, Fischer (Sisto 75), N Jorgensen (Y Poulsen 46).

*Oct11 - Copenhagen*
**Denmark 0**
**Montenegro 1** (Beciraj 32)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 20,852. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
**Denmark:** Schmeichel - P Ankersen, Kjaer, M Jorgensen (N Jorgensen 83), A Christensen, Durmisi, Hojbjerg (Sisto 63), Delaney, Eriksen, Fischer (Cornelius 70), Y Poulsen.
**Montenegro:** M Bozovic - Marusic, Simic (Sofranac 70), Savic, Tomasevic, Vesovic (Mijuskovic 90), N Vukcevic, Scekic, Kojasevic (Jovovic 63), Jovetic, Beciraj.

*Oct11 - Astana*
**Kazakhstan 0**
**Romania 0**
**Att:** 12,346. **Ref:** Neves (Por)
**Kazakhstan:** Pokatilov - Beisebekov, Y Akhmetov, Maliy, Logvinenko, Shomko, Muzhikov, Smakov, Kuat (Tagybergen 86), Baizhanov (Nurgaliyev 66), Khizhnichenko (Murtazayev 82).
**Romania:** Tatarusanu - Benzar, Sapunaru, D Grigore (Moti 26), Tosca, Hoban, Marin, Popa (Andone 84), Stanciu, Chipciu (Enache 46), Stancu.

*Oct11 - Warsaw*
**Poland 2** (Mkoyan og 48, Lewandowski 90+5)
**Armenia 1** (Pizzelli 50)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 44,786. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
**Poland:** Fabianski - Blaszczykowski, Glik, Cionek, Jedrzejczyk (Wszolek 34), Grosicki (Kapustka 70), Krychowiak, Zielinski, Rybus, Teodorczyk (Wilczek 85), Lewandowski.
**Armenia:** Beglaryan - Minasyan, Haroyan, Mkoyan, Andonian, Hayrapetyan, Hovhannisyan (Ozbiliz 61), Grigoryan, Muradyan (T Voskanyan 34), Manoyan, Pizzelli (Hakobyan 85).
*Sent off: Andonian 30.*

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP E**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Montenegro** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| **Poland** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| **Romania** | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| **Denmark** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| **Kazakhstan** | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| **Armenia** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 0 |

## Group F

*Oct 8 - London*
**England 2** (Sturridge 29, Alli 38)
**Malta 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 81,781. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
**England:** Hart - Walker, Cahill, Stones, Bertrand (Rose 19), Henderson, Rooney, Alli, Walcott (Rashford 68), Sturridge (Vardy 73), Lingard.
**Malta:** Hogg - S Borg, Z Muscat, Agius, Camilleri, A Muscat, Kristensen, Sciberras, P Fenech, Schembri (R Muscat 86), Effiong (M Mifsud 76).

*Oct 8 - Glasgow*
**Scotland 1** (McArthur 89)
**Lithuania 1** (Cernych 59)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 35,966. **Ref:** Stieler (Ger)
**Scotland:** Marshall - Paterson, R Martin, Hanley, Robertson, Snodgrass, Bannan, D Fletcher (McArthur 46), Ritchie (Griffiths 71), Burke (Forrest 57), C Martin.
**Lithuania:** Setkus - Vaitkunas, Freidgeimas, Girdvainis, Slavickas (Andriuskevicius 64), Cernych, Zulpa (Chvedukas 65), Kuklys, Novikovas, Valskis (Grigaravicius 85), Slivka.

*Oct 8 - Ljubljana*
**Slovenia 1** (Kronaveter 74)
**Slovakia 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 10,492. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
**Slovenia:** Oblak - Struna, Samardzic, Cesar, Jokic, Krhin, Kurtic (Kronaveter 72), Birsa (Novakovic 68), Verbic, Ilicic, Bezjak (Mevlja 90+1).
**Slovakia:** Kozacik - Pauschek (Sabo 79), Hubocan, Salata, Durica, Svento (Holubek 79), Kucka, Hrosovsky (Duris 79), Gregus, Mak, Hamsik.

*Oct11 - Vilnius*
**Lithuania 2** (Cernych 76, Novikovas pen 84)
**Malta 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 5,067. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
**Lithuania:** Setkus - Vaitkunas, Mikuckis, Freidgeimas, Andriuskevicius, Zulpa, Novikovas (Grigaravicius 87), Kuklys (Chvedukas 79), Slivka, Cernych, Valskis (Matulevicius 62).
**Malta:** Hogg - J Caruana, S Borg, Agius, Z Muscat, Zerafa, P Fenech (Pisani 85), Sciberras, Kristensen (Effiong 80), Schembri (R Muscat 83), M Mifsud. *Sent off: J Caruana 82.*

*Oct11 - Trnava*
**Slovakia 3** (Mak 18, 56, Nemec 68)
**Scotland 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 11,098. **Ref:** Strombergsson (Swe)
**Slovakia:** Kozacik - Sabo, Skrtel, Durica, Holubek, Duris, Kucka, Skriniar, Mak (Svento 80), Hamsik (Kiss 87), Nemec (Bakos 69).
**Scotland:** Marshall - Paterson, R Martin, Hanley, Tierney, Snodgrass, Bannan, D Fletcher (Griffiths 64), McArthur, Ritchie (Anya 64), S Fletcher (McGinn 76).

*Oct11 - Ljubljana*
**Slovenia 0**
**England 0**
**Att:** 13,274. **Ref:** Aytekin (Ger)
**Slovenia:** Oblak - Struna, Samardzic, Cesar (Mevlja 68), Jokic, Krhin (Omladic 84), Kurtic, Birsa (Kronaveter 59), Verbic, Ilicic, Bezjak.
**England:** Hart - Walker, Cahill, Stones, Rose, Dier, Henderson, Walcott (Townsend 62), Alli (Rooney 73), Lingard, Sturridge (Rashford 82).

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP F**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **England** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| **Lithuania** | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| **Slovenia** | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| **Scotland** | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| **Slovakia** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| **Malta** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 0 |

## Group G

*Oct 6 - Turin*
**Italy 1** (De Rossi pen 82)
**Spain 1** (Vitolo 55)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 38,470. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
**Italy:** Buffon - Barzagli, Bonucci, Romagnoli, De Rossi, Florenzi, Montolivo (Bonaventura 30), Parolo (Belotti 76), De Sciglio, Eder, Pelle (Immobile 60).
**Spain:** De Gea - Jordi Alba (Nacho 22), Sergio Ramos, Pique, Carvajal, Iniesta, Busquets, Koke, Silva, Diego Costa (Morata 67), Vitolo (Thiago 84).

*Oct 6 - Vaduz*
**Liechtenstein 0**
**Albania 2** (Jehle og 12, Balaj 71)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 5,864. **Ref:** Bognar (Hun)
**Liechtenstein:** Jehle - Oehri, Polverino (Rechsteiner 46), Kaufmann, Goppel, N Hasler, Wieser, Marcel Buchel, Burgmeier, Gubser (Frick 60), Salanovic (Kuhne 73).
**Albania:** Berisha - Hysaj, Gjimshiti, Mavraj, Aliji, Kukeli (M Basha 44), Hyka, Abrashi (Lila 46), Roshi, Balaj, Llullaku (Cikalleshi 69).

*Oct 6 - Skopje*
**Macedonia 1** (Nestorovski 63)
**Israel 2** (Hemed 25, Tal Ben Haim/F 43)
**HT:** 0-2. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Marriner (Eng)
**Macedonia:** Bogatinov - Mojsov, Sikov (B Ibraimi 51), Ristevski, Ristovski, Petrovikj (Spirovski 46), Zhuta, Hasani, Alioski, Pandev (Jahovic 76), Nestorovski.
**Israel:** Goresh - Dasa, Tzedek, Tibi, Davidzada, Golasa (Einbinder 72), N Bitton, A Cohen, Zahavi, Hemed (Abed 75), Tal Ben Haim/F (Buzaglo 68). *Sent off: Tibi 90+4.*

*Oct 9 - Shkoder*
**Albania 0**
**Spain 2** (Diego Costa 55, Nolito 63)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 15,245. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
**Albania:** Berisha - Hysaj, Gjimshiti, Mavraj, Agolli, Lila, Xhaka (Hyka 75), Memushaj (M Basha 68), Roshi, Balaj, Lenjani (Aliji 46).
**Spain:** De Gea - Koke, Sergio Ramos (Inigo Martinez 80), Pique, Monreal, Iniesta (Isco 78), Busquets, Vitolo (Nolito 60), Thiago, Silva, Diego Costa.

*Oct 9 - Jerusalem*
**Israel 2** (Hemed 4, 16)
**Liechtenstein 1** (Goppel 49)
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Pisani (Mlt)
**Israel:** Goresh - Dasa, Tzedek, Gershon, Ben Harush, Tal Ben Haim/F (Dabbour 81), A Cohen, Golasa, Buzaglo (Atzili 63), Zahavi, Hemed (Kahat 75).
**Liechtenstein:** Jehle - Rechsteiner, Kaufmann, Goppel, Marcel Buchel (Salanovic 88), Martin Buchel, Wieser, Burgmeier (Kuhne 81), N Hasler, A Christen, Gubser (Frick 75).

*Oct 9 - Skopje*
**Macedonia 2** (Nestorovski 57, Hasani 59)
**Italy 3** (Belotti 24, Immobile 75, 90+2)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 19,195. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
**Macedonia:** Bogatinov - Ristovski, Mojsov, Sikov, Ristevski, Zhuta (B Ibraimi 46), Hasani (Trajcevski 84), Spirovski, Alioski, Pandev, Nestorovski (Petrovikj 68).
**Italy:** Buffon - Candreva, Barzagli, Bonucci, Romagnoli, De Sciglio, Bernardeschi (Sansone 64), Verratti, Bonaventura (Parolo 64), Belotti (Eder 84), Immobile.

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP G**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Spain** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 7 |
| **Italy** | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| **Albania** | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| **Israel** | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| **Macedonia** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 0 |
| **Liechtenstein** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 12 | 0 |

## Group H

*Oct 7 - Brussels*
**Belgium 4** (Spahic og 26, E Hazard 29, Alderweireld 60, R Lukaku 79)
**Bosnia-Herzegovina 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 42,653. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
**Belgium:** Courtois - Meunier, Alderweireld, Vertonghen, J Lukaku (Ciman 21), Witsel, Mertens, Fellaini, E Hazard (Mirallas 87), Carrasco, R Lukaku (Benteke 82).
**Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Begovic - Bicakcic, Spahic, Zukanovic, Kolasinac, Lulic, Jajalo (Visca 73), Medunjanin, Pjanic (Cimirot 81), Dzeko, Ibisevic (Djuric 64).

*Oct 7 - Tallinn*
**Estonia 4** (Kait 47, 70, Vassiljev 52, Mosnikov 88)
**Gibraltar 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 4,678. **Ref:** Eskov (Rus)
**Estonia:** Aksalu - Teniste, Baranov, Klavan, Kruglov, Kait (Lepistu 80), Mets, Zenjov (Ojamaa 65), Vassiljev (Mosnikov 61), Luts, Henri Anier.
**Gibraltar:** J Perez - Garcia, R Casciaro, R Chipolina, J Chipolina (K Casciaro 89), Bardon, Bosio (Payas 58), Walker, Mascarenhas-Olivero, Priestley (Coombes 66), L Casciaro.

*Oct 7 - Piraeus*
**Greece 2** (Mitroglou 12, Mantalos 42)
**Cyprus 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 16,512. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
**Greece:** Karnezis - Torosidis, Papastathopoulos, Manolas, Tzavellas (Karelis 88), Maniatis, Stafylidis (K Papadopoulos 70), Mantalos, Fortounis, Bakasetas (Holebas 78), Mitroglou.
**Cyprus:** Panayi - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Charalambous, Artymatas (Kyriakou 78), Kastanos, Laban, Charalambides (Christofi 66), Mytidis (Makris 83), Efrem.

*Oct10 - Zenica*
**Bosnia-Herzegovina 2** (Dzeko 70, 81)
**Cyprus 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 8,900. **Ref:** Estrada Fernandez (Spa)
**Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Begovic - O Vranjes, Sunjic, Spahic, Kolasinac (I Hajrovic 64), Visca (T-S Susic 78), Pjanic, Medunjanin, Lulic, Djuric (Ibisevic 81), Dzeko.
**Cyprus:** Panayi - Demetriou, Dossa Junior, Laifis, Alexandrou, Artymatas (Mytidis 85), Kastanos, Laban, Christofi (Charalambides 77), Sotiriou, Makris (Efrem 72).

*Oct10 - Tallinn*
**Estonia 0**
**Greece 2** (Torosidis 2, Stafylidis 61)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 4,467. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
**Estonia:** Aksalu - Teniste (Kams 31), Baranov, Klavan, Kallaste, Marin, Aleksandr Dmitrijev (Mosnikov 79), Vassiljev, Mets, Luts (Purje 69), Zenjov.
**Greece:** Karnezis - Torosidis (Oikonomou 18), Papastathopoulos (Tachtsidis 7), Manolas, Stafylidis, Maniatis (Tziolis 87), K Papadopoulos, Bakasetas, Mantalos, Karelis, Mitroglou.

*Oct10 - Faro-Loule, Portugal*
**Gibraltar 0**
**Belgium 6** (Benteke 1, 43, 56, Witsel 19, Mertens 51, E Hazard 79)
**HT:** 0-3. **Att:** 1,959. **Ref:** Raczkowski (Pol)
**Gibraltar:** Ibrahim - Wiseman, R Casciaro, R Chipolina, J Chipolina, Garcia, Bosio (Payas 46), Walker (Bardon 80), Mascarenhas-Olivero, K Casciaro (Yome 86), L Casciaro.
**Belgium:** Courtois - Alderweireld, Ciman, Vertonghen, Meunier, Witsel, Defour, Carrasco (Chadli 53), Mertens (Mirallas 64), Benteke (Batshuayi 80), E Hazard.

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP H**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Belgium** | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 9 |
| **Greece** | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| **Bosnia-Herz** | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| **Estonia** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 |
| **Cyprus** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| **Gibraltar** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 0 |

## Group I

*Oct 6 - Reykjavik*
**Iceland 3** (Arnason 37, Finnbogason 90+1, R Sigurdsson 90+6)
**Finland 2** (Pukki 21, Lod 39)
**HT:** 1-2. **Att:** 9,548. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
**Iceland:** Kristinsson - B Saevarsson (E Bjarnason 89), Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, B Bjarnason, A Gunnarsson, G Sigurdsson, J Gudmundsson, Sigurdarson (Kjartansson 75), Finnbogason.
**Finland:** Hradecky - Sauli Vaisanen, Arajuuri, N Moisander, Arkivuo, Ring (Schuller 90+4), Halsti, P Hetemaj, Lod, Pukki, Hamalainen (Markkanen 56; Raitala 85).

*Oct 6 - Shkoder, Albania*
**Kosovo 0**
**Croatia 6** (Mandzukic 6, 24, 35, Mitrovic 68, Perisic 83, N Kalinic 90+2)
**HT:** 0-3. **Att:** 14,612.
**Ref:** Fernandez Borbalan (Spa)
**Kosovo:** Ujkani - Perdedaj, Pnishi, Pepa, Paqarada, Kryeziu, V Berisha, Rashica, Zeneli (Shala 77), B Berisha (Halimi 58), Celina (Albert Bunjaku 68).
**Croatia:** Subasic - Vrsaljko, Corluka (Mitrovic 46), Vida, Pivaric, Brozovic, Kovacic, Badelj, Perisic, Kramaric (Rog 71), Mandzukic (N Kalinic 59).

*Oct 6 - Konya*
**Turkey 2** (Ozan 45+1, Calhanoglu pen 81)
**Ukraine 2** (Yarmolenko pen 24, Kravets 27)
**HT:** 1-2. **Att:** 36,714. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)
**Turkey:** Volkan Babacan - Sener, Toprak, Hakan Balta (Ayhan 46), Caner, Mor, Ozan (Volkan Sen 77), Mehmet Topal, Calhanoglu, Enes (Cigerci 46), Tosun.
**Ukraine:** Pyatov - Butko, Kucher, Ordets, Sobol, Stepanenko, Yarmolenko, Zinchenko (Sydorchuk 46), Kovalenko, Konoplyanka (Petriak 82), Kravets (Zozulya 73).

*Oct 9 - Tampere*
**Finland 0**
**Croatia 1** (Mandzukic 18)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 15,567. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
**Finland:** Hradecky - Raitala, J Ojala, Arajuuri, Sauli Vaisanen (Roope Riski 87), Arkivuo (Schuller 46), Ring (Lam 67), N Moisander, Lod, Saksela, Pukki.
**Croatia:** Subasic - Vrsaljko, Mitrovic, Vida, Pivaric, Brozovic (Cop 71), Badelj, Kovacic, Perisic, Kramaric (Rog 81), Mandzukic (N Kalinic 87).

*Oct 9 - Reykjavik*
**Iceland 2** (Toprak og 42, Finnbogason 44)
**Turkey 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 9,775. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
**Iceland:** Halldorsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, E Bjarnason (Magnusson 86), G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, J Gudmundsson, Finnbogason (Kjartansson 67), Bodvarsson (Sigurdarson 61).
**Turkey:** Volkan Babacan - Sener, Toprak, Mehmet Topal, Caner, Oztekin (Tosun 59), Ozan (Cigerci 43), Ayhan, Calhanoglu, Volkan Sen (Erdinc 66), Mor.

*Oct 9 - Krakow, Poland*
**Ukraine 3** (Rrahmani og 31, Yarmolenko 81, Rotan 87)
**Kosovo 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 999. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
**Ukraine:** Pyatov - Butko, Ordets, Kucher, Sobol, Yarmolenko, Kovalenko, Stepanenko, Konoplyanka (Karavaev 79), Zinchenko (Rotan 63), Kravets (Zozulya 84).
**Kosovo:** Ujkani - Perdedaj (Sulejmani 77), Rrahmani, Pnishi, Paqarada, Kryeziu, Meha (B Berisha 54), Rashica (Zeneli 66), Shala, V Berisha, Muriqi.

**WC QUALS – EUROPE – GROUP I**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 7 |
| Iceland | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| Ukraine | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 5 |
| Turkey | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| Finland | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 1 |
| Kosovo | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 1 |

*Each team will play10 games (5x2); games to be completed by Oct 2017*

● *The 9 group winners will qualify for the finals; the 8 runners-up with the best record (against the countries finishing1st, 3rd, 4th & 5th in the respective groups) will be paired in 4 play-offs, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals*

## SOUTH AMERICA section

● *4.5 finals places available*

*Oct 6 - Natal*
**Brazil 5** (Neymar 10, Philippe Coutinho 25, Filipe Luis 38, Gabriel Jesus 43, Roberto Firmino 75)
**Bolivia 0**
**HT:** 4-0. **Ref:** Lamouroux (Col)
**Brazil:** Alisson - Daniel Alves, Miranda, Marquinhos, Filipe Luis, Fernandinho, Giuliano (Lucas Lima 76), Renato Augusto, Philippe Coutinho, Gabriel Jesus (Roberto Firmino 67), Neymar (Willian 68).
**Bolivia:** Lampe - Rodriguez, Zenteno, Raldes, M Bejarano, Melean, Azogue, Duk (Escobar 78), Arce (Ramallo 54), Campos (Vaca 64), Moreno.

*Oct 6 - Quito*
**Ecuador 3** (A Valencia 19, Ramirez 23, F Caicedo 46)
**Chile 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Ref:** Vigliano (Arg)
**Ecuador:** Dreer - Paredes, A Mina, L Caicedo, Ramirez, A Valencia, Noboa, Orejuela, Martinez (Cazares 88), E Valencia (J Ayovi 82), F Caicedo (Ibarra 50).
**Chile:** Bravo - Isla, Roco, G Jara, Mena, Aranguiz, Vidal, Hernandez, M Diaz (Castillo 50), Sanchez, Vargas (Valencia 74).

*Oct 6 - Asuncion*
**Paraguay 0**
**Colombia 1** (Cardona 90+1)
**HT:** 0-0. **Ref:** Bascunan (Chl)
**Paraguay:** D Barreto - Moreira, Gomez, Da Silva, Candia, Ayala, Rojas, C Riveros (Gonzalez 46), O Romero, Jorge Benitez (Barrios 63), Lezcano (Dominguez 75).
**Colombia:** Ospina - Arias, Mina, O Murillo, Diaz, C Sanchez, Barrios (Mejia 71), Aguilar, Cuadrado (Berrio 82), Muriel (Cardona 77), Bacca.

*Oct 6 - Lima*
**Peru 2** (Guerrero 58, Cueva pen 84)
**Argentina 2** (Funes Mori 15, Higuain 77)
**HT:** 0-1. **Ref:** Ricci (Bra)
**Peru:** Gallese - Corzo, Ramos, Rodriguez, Trauco, Benavente (Da Silva 46), Tapia, Yotun, Flores (Ruidiaz 58), Cueva (Lobaton 85), Guerrero.
**Argentina:** Romero - Zabaleta, Otamendi, Funes Mori, Rojo, Mascherano, Kranevitter, Dybala (Correa 65), Aguero (Banega 73), Di Maria, Higuain.

*Oct 6 - Montevideo*
**Uruguay 3** (Lodeiro 29, Cavani 46, 79)
**Venezuela 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Ref:** Orosco (Bol)
**Uruguay:** Muslera - Corujo, Coates, Godin, G Silva (A Pereira 89), Sanchez, Arevalo, C Rodriguez (Laxalt 80), Lodeiro (Vecino 67), Suarez, Cavani.
**Venezuela:** D Hernandez - A Gonzalez, Vizcarrondo, Angel, Villanueva, Figuera (Otero 81), Rincon, Anor (Velazquez 65), Guerra, Penaranda (Martinez 61), S Rondon.
*Sent off: Vizcarrondo 64.*

*Oct11 - Cordoba*
**Argentina 0**
**Paraguay 1** (Gonzalez 18)
**HT:** 0-1. **Ref:** Fedorczuk (Uru)
**Argentina:** Romero - Mercado, Demichelis, Musacchio, Rojo, Mascherano, Banega (Pratto 70), Gaitan (Dybala 59), Aguero, Di Maria, Higuain.
**Paraguay:** Villar - Moreira, Gomez, Da Silva, Alonso, Rojas (B Valdez 75), C Riveros, Gonzalez, O Romero, Almiron (C Ortiz 68), A Romero (Perez 79).

*Oct11 - La Paz*
**Bolivia 2** (Escobar 5, 43)
**Ecuador 2** (E Valencia 49, 89)
**HT:** 2-0. **Ref:** Diaz de Vivar (Par)
**Bolivia:** Lampe - Saavedra, Raldes, Zenteno, M Bejarano (J Flores 52), W Flores, Veizaga, Escobar (Rodriguez 86), Ramallo (Duk 62), Arce, Moreno.
**Ecuador:** Dreer - Paredes (Mena 72), A Mina, L Caicedo, Ramirez, A Valencia, Noboa (Achilier 82), Orejuela (Oyola 77), Ibarra, E Valencia, Martinez. *Sent off: L Caicedo 79.*

*Oct11 - Santiago*
**Chile 2** (Vidal 10, 85)
**Peru 1** (Flores 76)
**HT:** 1-0. **Ref:** Zambrano (Ecu)
**Chile:** Bravo - Isla, Roco, G Jara, Beausejour, M Diaz, Aranguiz, Vidal (Pulgar 89), Vargas (Gutierrez 90), Sanchez, Castillo (Puch 69).
**Peru:** Gallese - Corzo, Ramos, Rodriguez, Trauco, Avila (Ruidiaz 46), Tapia (Da Silva 78), Lobaton (Aquino 34), Flores, Cueva, Guerrero.

*Oct11 - Barranquilla*
**Colombia 2** (Aguilar 15, Mina 84)
**Uruguay 2** (C Rodriguez 27, Suarez 73)
**HT:** 1-1. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)
**Colombia:** Ospina - O Murillo, Arias (Berrio 75), Mina, Diaz, C Sanchez, Aguilar, Cuadrado, M Torres, Bacca (Martinez 58), Muriel (Cardona 46).
**Uruguay:** Muslera - Corujo, Coates, Godin, G Silva (A Pereira 44), Sanchez (Stuani 70), Arevalo, Vecino, C Rodriguez (Laxalt 86), Suarez, Cavani.

*Oct11 - Merida*
**Venezuela 0**
**Brazil 2** (Gabriel Jesus 8, Willian 53)
**HT:** 0-1. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
**Venezuela:** D Hernandez - Rosales, Angel, Velazquez, R Feltscher, Anor (Guerra 60), Arles Flores (Herrera 84), Rincon, Penaranda (Otero 73), Martinez, S Rondon.
**Brazil:** Alisson - Daniel Alves, Marquinhos, Miranda, Filipe Luis, Fernandinho, Paulinho, Renato Augusto, Willian (Taison 90), Gabriel Jesus, Philippe Coutinho (Giuliano 83).

**WC QUALS – SOUTH AMERICA**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 10 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 23 | 9 | 21 |
| Uruguay | 10 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 21 | 7 | 20 |
| Ecuador | 10 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 14 | 17 |
| Colombia | 10 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 12 | 17 |
| Argentina | 10 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 9 | 16 |
| Paraguay | 10 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 15 |
| Chile | 10 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 15 | 16 | 14 |
| Peru | 10 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 19 | 8 |
| Bolivia | 10 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 20 | 8 |
| Venezuela | 10 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 26 | 2 |

*Each team will play18 games (9x2); games to be completed by Oct 2017*

● *The top 4 will qualify for the finals; the 5th-placed country will meet the Oceania play-off round winner in a play-off for a place in the finals*

## 2017 AFRICAN NATIONS CUP FINALS

*Host country: Gabon*

### Match schedule

**Group A**
Jan 14 Gabon v Guinea-Bissau (Libreville)
Jan 14 Burkina Faso v Cameroon (Libreville)
Jan 18 Gabon v Burkina Faso (Libreville)
Jan 18 Cameroon v Guinea-Bissau (Libreville)
Jan 22 Cameroon v Gabon (Libreville)
Jan 22 Guinea-Bissau v Burkina Faso (Franceville)

**Group B**
Jan 15 Algeria v Zimbabwe (Franceville)
Jan 15 Tunisia v Senegal (Franceville)
Jan 19 Algeria v Tunisia (Franceville)
Jan 19 Senegal v Zimbabwe (Franceville)
Jan 23 Senegal v Algeria (Franceville)
Jan 23 Zimbabwe v Tunisia (Libreville)

**Group C**
Jan 16 Ivory Coast v Togo (Oyem)
Jan 16 DR Congo v Morocco (Oyem)
Jan 20 Ivory Coast v DR Congo (Oyem)
Jan 20 Morocco v Togo (Oyem)
Jan 24 Morocco v Ivory Coast (Oyem)
Jan 24 Togo v DR Congo (Port-Gentil)

**Group D**
Jan 17 Ghana v Uganda (Port-Gentil)
Jan 17 Mali v Egypt (Port-Gentil)
Jan 21 Ghana v Mali (Port-Gentil)
Jan 21 Egypt v Uganda (Port-Gentil)
Jan 25 Egypt v Ghana (Port-Gentil)
Jan 25 Uganda v Mali (Oyem)

**Quarter-finals**
Jan 28 Gp A 1st v Gp B 2nd (Libreville) (QF1)
Jan 28 Gp B 1st v Gp A 2nd (Franceville) (QF2)
Jan 29 Gp C 1st v Gp D 2nd (Oyem) (QF3)
Jan 29 Gp D 1st v Gp C 2nd (Port-Gentil) (QF4)

**Semi-finals**
Feb 1 QF1 winner v QF4 winner (Libreville)
Feb 2 QF2 winner v QF3 winner (Franceville)

**3rd-place match**
Feb 4 (Port-Gentil)

**Final**
Feb 5 (Libreville)

## 2019 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

### 2nd play-off round

**1st leg**
*Oct 8 - Kaohsiung, Taiwan*
**East Timor 1** (Rufino Gama 5)
**Taiwan 2** (Wu Chun-ching 7, 38)
**HT:** 1-2. **Att:** 2,849. **Ref:** Vo (Vie)

**2nd legs**
*Oct10 - Thimphu*
**Bhutan 3** (J T Dorji 4, C Gyeltshen 26, 76)
**Bangladesh 1** (M Islam 63)
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 6,120. **Ref:** Khurram (Pak)
*Bhutan 3-1 on agg*

*Oct11 - Vientiane*
**Laos 1** (Sihavong 80)
**Maldives 1** (Nashid 90+2)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 1,200. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)
*Maldives 5-1 on agg*

*Oct11 - Kaohsiung*
**Taiwan 2** (Chen Yi-wei 10, Chen Hao-wei 75)
**East Timor 1** (Jose Oliveira 85)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Kim Hee-gon (SKo)
*Taiwan 4-2 on agg*

● *Winners enter the final qualifying stage*

## CARIBBEAN CUP

### 3rd round

(Haiti, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago received byes to this round)

**Group 1**
*Oct 8 - Paramaribo*
**Surinam 3** (Kisoor 58, Talea 103, Rozenblad 110)
**Guyana 2** (Barrington 4, McKenzie-Lyle 120)
*Aet*[1]. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-1

*Oct11 - Leonora*
**Guyana 2** (Butters 7, 30)
**Jamaica 4** (Watson 63, Dicoy Williams 88, Francis 116, Burke 120)
*Aet*[1]. **HT:** 2-0. **90mins:** 2-2

**CARIBBEAN CUP – 3RD ROUND: GROUP 1**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jamaica | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Surinam | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Guyana | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 0 |

***Remaining game:*** *Jamaica v Surinam (Nov13)*

**Group 2**
*Oct 8 - Remire-Montjoly*
**French Guiana 1** (Abelinti 63)
**St Kitts & Nevis 0**
**HT:** 0-0

**CARIBBEAN CUP – 3RD ROUND: GROUP 2**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| French Guiana | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Haiti | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| St Kitts & Nevis | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

***Remaining games:*** *Haiti v French Guiana (Nov 9), St Kitts & Nevis v Haiti (Nov13)*

**Group 3**
*Oct 5 - Willemstad*
**Curacao 3** (Bacuna 12, Janga 80, Van Kessel 90)
**Antigua & Barbuda 0**
**HT:** 1-0

*Oct 8 - St John's*
**Antigua & Barbuda 2** (Byers 43, Smith 86)
**Puerto Rico 0**
**HT:** 1-0

*Oct11 - Bayamon*
**Puerto Rico 2** (H Ramos 16, M Ramos 27)
**Curacao 4** (Janga 69, Bacuna 85, 120+1, Zschusschen 97)
*Aet*[1]. **HT:** 2-0. **90mins:** 2-2

**CARIBBEAN CUP – 3RD ROUND: GROUP 3 – FINAL**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Curacao (Q) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 6 |
| Antigua & B | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Puerto Rico | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 0 |

**Group 4**
*Oct 5 - Couva*
**Trinidad & Tobago 4** (Molino 14, 18, 55, Cato 30)
**Dominican Republic 0**
**HT:** 3-0

*Oct 8 - San Cristobal*
**Dominican Republic 1** (Beard 75)
**Martinique 2** (Langil 14, Coureur 89)
**HT:** 0-1

*Oct11 - Fort-de-France*
**Martinique 2** (Parsemain 105, Langil 120)
**Trinidad & Tobago 0**
*Aet*[1]. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0

**CARIBBEAN CUP – 3RD ROUND: GROUP 4 – FINAL**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Martinique (Q) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Trinidad & Tob | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Dominican Rep | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 0 |

[1]*Draws not permitted in this competition*

● *The 4 group winners qualify for the semi-finals*

## AFF SUZUKI CUP

*For countries belonging to the ASEAN Football Federation (Association of South East Asian Nations)*

### Qualifying group

*Played in Phnom Penh, Cambodia*

*Oct15*
**Brunei 2** (Adi 22, Shafie 29)
**East Timor 1** (Rufino Gama 11)
**HT:** 2-1. **Ref:** Kasimov (Uzb)

*Oct15*
**Cambodia 2** (Udom pen 42, Chhoeun 81)
**Laos 1** (M Souksavath 52)
**HT:** 1-0. **Ref:** Ibrahim (Jor)

*Oct18*
**East Timor 1** (Ricardo 78)
**Laos 2** (Syvilay pen 40, Vongchiengkham 84)
**HT:** 0-1. **Ref:** Al Hammadi (UAE)

*Oct18*
**Brunei 0**
**Cambodia 3** (Udom 5, 42, Sokpheng 8)
**HT:** 0-3. **Ref:** Lau (HK)
*Sent off: Yura (Brunei) 88*

*Oct 21*
**Cambodia 3** (Dina 1, Vathanaka 16, 76)
**East Timor 2** (Anggisu pen 19, Nelson 35)
**HT:** 2-2. **Ref:** Kasimov (Uzb)

*Oct 21*
**Laos 4** (Vongchiengkham 45, Syvilay pen 51, 57, 76)
**Brunei 3** (Adi 36, Bolkiah pen 67, Razimie 90+2)
**HT:** 1-1. **Ref:** Ibrahim (Jor)

**AFF SUZUKI CUP – QUALIFYING GROUP – FINAL**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cambodia (Q) | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 9 |
| Laos | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Brunei | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| East Timor | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 0 |

● *Cambodia have qualified for the AFF Suzuki Cup finals, to be held from Nov19 to Dec17, 2016. The 7 other finals participants – Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – qualified automatically*

## FRIENDLIES

### Thursday, September 29
*Sep 29 - Doha*
**Qatar 3** (Soria 24, 30, 43)
**Serbia 0**
**HT:** 3-0
*Played behind closed doors*
**Qatar:** Al Sheeb - Khoukhi, Hassan (I Mohammad 64), Yasser, Pedro Miguel, Luiz Martin (Ahmed 64), Tabata, Kasola, Al Haidos (Al Alawi 64), El Sayed (Hatem 14), Soria (Afif 64).
**Serbia:** Kljajic - Petkovic (Cirkovic 46), Maras, Milenkovic (Kovacevic 46), Miletic (Urosevic 46), Poletanovic, Mladenovic (Plavsic 46), Ristic (Stanojevic 46), Jovanovic, Stankovic, Ozegovic (Gobeljic 46).

### Friday, September 30
*Sep 30 - Gaborone*
**Botswana 1** (Sesinyi)
**Angola 1** (Paty)
*Botswana 3-0 on pens (competitive friendly, marking Botswana's 50th anniversary of independence)*

### Tuesday, October 4
*Oct 4 - Kinshasa*
**DR Congo 0**
**Kenya 1** (Olunga 65)
**HT:** 0-0

*Oct 4 - Lome*
**Togo 1** (Atakora 30)
**Uganda 0**
**HT:** 1-0

### Wednesday, October 5
*Oct 5 - Honiara*
**Solomon Islands 0**
**New Caledonia 3** (Kai 49, 90+1, R Kayara 64)
**HT:** 0-0

*Oct 5 - Dushanbe*
**Tajikistan 3** (Davronov pen 22, D Ergashev 60, Umarbaev 90)
**Palestine 3** (Cantillana pen 52, Seyam 57, Nahyeh 68)
**HT:** 1-0

### Thursday, October 6
*Oct 6 - Phnom Penh*
**Cambodia 0**
**Hong Kong 2** (Karikari 7, Akande 32)
**HT:** 0-2

*Oct 6 - Bishkek*
**Kyrgyzstan 0**
**Lebanon 0**

*Oct 6 - Marrakech, Morocco*
**Mauritania 0**
**Canada 4** (Ricketts 53, 80, Vitoria 55, M Haber 59)
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 200
**Mauritania:** Salahdine - Sy (Diaw 74), Sarr, Ba, Wade (Abderrahmane 46), Dellahi, Guidileye, Gueye (Teguedi 64), Camara (M Samba 54), Diakite, Bagili (El Moctar 45).
**Canada:** Thomas - Dixon (Aird 64), Henry, Vitoria, Tissot (Ouimette 81), Straith (Bustos 77), Osorio (Piette 75), Arfield, Ricketts (Hamilton 83), Hoilett, M Haber (Jackson-Hamel 69).

*Oct 6 - Ho Chi Minh City*
**Vietnam 5** (Nguyen Tuan Anh 32, Le Cong Vinh 51, Vu Van Thanh 63, Luong Xuan Truong 85, Pham Thanh Luong 90+2)
**North Korea 2** (Pak Kwang-ryong 15, 53)
**HT:** 1-1

### Friday, October 7
*Oct 7 - Havana*
**Cuba 0**
**United States 2** (Wondolowski 62, Green 71)
**HT:** 0-0. **Ref:** Perea (Pan)
**Cuba:** Sanchez - Piedra, Urgelles, Lopez, Napoles, Caballero (Peraza 76), Luis (Blanco 74), Francisco, Gomez (Espinosa 66), M Reyes (Olivares 89), A Hernandez.
**United States:** Horvath - Yedlin (Chandler 46), Cameron, Brooks (Birnbaum 46), F Johnson, Pulisic (Wondolowski 46), Bradley, Kljestan (Williams 69), Green, Altidore (Arriola 69), Wood (Morris 60).

*Oct 7 - Muscat*
**Oman 1** (Q Said 30)
**Jordan 1** (Abu Amarah 32)
**HT:** 1-1

*Oct 7 - Manila*
**Philippines 1** (Mike Ott 49)
**Bahrain 3** (Adam 5, 46, Al Romaihi 90+2)
**HT:** 0-1

*Oct 7 - Singapore*
**Singapore 0**
**Malaysia 0**
**Att:** 24,000

### Saturday, October 8
*Oct 8 - Belmopan*
**Belize 1** (Kuylen 32)
**Honduras 2** (Acosta 28, Salas pen 89)
**HT:** 1-1
**Belize:** W West - Eiley, Lennen, Smith, Gaynair, Casey (August 66), Amankwah-Mensah (Torres 84), Jimenez (Makin 68), Kuylen (Davis 67), McCaulay (King 78), Salazar (Polanco 72).
**Honduras:** Escober - Beckeles, Vargas, Leveron, Oseguera, Acosta (A Mejia 64), Claros (Benavidez 87), Discua (Canales 48), Quioto, Vega (R Martinez 62), Reyes (Salas 71).

*Oct 8 - Macau*
**Macau 0**
**Hong Kong 3** (Lo Kong Wai 25, 53, Lai Lok Yin 85)
**HT:** 0-1

*Oct 8 - Nashville, USA*
**Mexico 2** (G Dos Santos pen 29, Fabian 56)
**New Zealand 1** (Rojas 46)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 40,287. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
**Mexico:** J J Corona - Duenas, Silva, Ayala, Marin, Molina, Fabian (Pineda 73), Lozano, G Dos Santos, Gallardo (Brizuela 61), Peralta (Pulido 65).
**New Zealand:** Marinovic - Graham (Fallon 89), Tzimopoulos (Durante 85), Boxall, Reid, Wynne (Colvey 70), Lewis (Dyer 70), Barbarouses (Patterson 58), Rojas (Ridenton 78), McGlinchey, Wood.

*Oct 8 - Honiara*
**Solomon Islands 0**
**New Caledonia 1** (Kai 12)
**HT:** 0-1

### Sunday, October 9
*Oct 9 - Phnom Penh*
**Cambodia 4** (Visal 2, Bin 41, Sokpheng 69, 89)
**Sri Lanka 0**
**HT:** 2-0

*Oct 9 - Sleman*
**Indonesia 2** (Zamrun 27, Bachdim 28)
**Vietnam 2** (Le Van Thang 4, Vu Minh Tuan 12)
**HT:** 2-2

*Oct 9 - Krasnodar*
**Russia 3** (Samedov 31, Dzyuba 48, 61)
**Costa Rica 4** (Azofeifa 22, B Ruiz 29, V Berezutsky og 45+2, Campbell pen 90+2)
**HT:** 1-3. **Att:** 34,200. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
**Russia:** Dzhanaev - Kutepov, V Berezutsky, Smolnikov, Zobnin, Petrov, Gazinsky, Shatov (Poloz 56), Samedov (Ozdoyev 88), Erokhin (Zhirkov 82), Dzyuba (Kanunnikov 89).
**Costa Rica:** Navas - Gonzalez, Calvo, Acosta (Waston 69), Salvatierra, Matarrita (Oviedo 75), Azofeifa (Tejeda 66), Borges (Guzman 79), Venegas, B Ruiz (Campbell 69), Urena (Wallace 69).

*Oct 9 - Lome*
**Togo 2** (Laba 39, 47)
**Mozambique 0**
**HT:** 1-0

### Monday, October 10
*Oct10 - Manila*
**Philippines 1** (Ramsay 76)
**North Korea 3** (Pak Kwang-ryong 11, Pak Song-chol 38, Jong Il-gwan 67)
**HT:** 0-2

### Tuesday, October 11
*Oct11 - Hong Kong*
**Hong Kong 2** (Akande 42, Huang Yang 70)
**Singapore 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 4,136

*Oct11 - Bishkek*
**Kyrgyzstan 1** (Kozubaev 78)
**Turkmenistan 0**
**HT:** 0-0

*Oct11 - Beirut*
**Lebanon 1** (Maatouk 86)
**Equatorial Guinea 1** (Javier Balboa pen 63)
**HT:** 0-0

*Oct11 - Shah Alam*
**Malaysia 1** (Hadin 45+1)
**Afghanistan 1** (N Amiri 22)
**HT:** 1-1. **Att:** 1,100

*Oct11 - Bridgeview, USA*
**Mexico 1** (Peralta 58)
**Panama 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 19,017. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)
**Mexico:** Munoz - Silva (Duenas 46), Ayala, Marin, Aldrete, Molina, Pineda (Robles 74), Gutierrez (Gallardo 62), Brizuela (Lozano 46), G Dos Santos, Peralta.
**Panama:** Calderon - M Murillo, Escobar, Ariano, Ovalle, A Henriquez, Barcenas (M Vargas 59), Cooper, Nunez (Clarke 59), Gonzalez (Arroyo 46), Blackburn (Cordoba 59).

*Oct11 - Marrakech*
**Morocco 4** (Carcela 12, Ziyech pen 65, pen 81, Alioui 86)
**Canada 0**
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Abdulla Hassan (UAE)
**Morocco:** Bounou - Chafik (Hakimi 67), Da Costa (Abdelhamid 84), Ait Bennasser, Mendyl, El Ahmadi, Fajr, Carcela (Alioui 67), Ziyech (Boutaib 84), El Haddad (H'Midat 74), En-Nesyri (Bouhaddouz 67).
**Canada:** Borjan (Thomas 72) - Aird, James, Edgar, De Jong, Piette (Bustos 65), Straith, Osorio, Ricketts, Jackson (Tissot 65), M Haber (Jackson-Hamel 61).

*Oct11 - Muscat*
**Oman 2** (Al Yahyaei 75, Al Ruzaiqi 90)
**Bahrain 2** (Al Romaihi 38, Al Alawi 68)
**HT:** 0-1

*Oct11 - Durban*
**South Africa 1** (Patosi 51)
**Ghana 1** (Wakaso pen 37)
**HT:** 0-1. **Att:** 9,674. **Ref:** Sikazwe (Zam)
**South Africa:** Mhlongo (Mabokgwane 86) - Mobara, Nhlapo (Mphahlele 41), Hlatshwayo, Matlaba, Patosi (Serero 60), Manyisa, Furman, Mahlangu (Makola 59), Rodgers (Mncwango 90+3), S Vilakazi (Gabuza 71).
**Ghana:** Kwarasey - Afful (Gyimah 62), Boye, Amartey, Rahman, Wakaso (Gyan 81), Atsu (Koomson 81), Partey, Waris (Kofi 70), Tetteh, Acheampong (Accam 46).

*Oct11 - Washington DC*
**United States 1** (Green 27)
**New Zealand 1** (Patterson 73)
**HT:** 1-0. **Att:** 9,012. **Ref:** Guerra (Gtm)
**United States:** Yarbrough (Bingham 46) - Orozco, Gonzalez, Besler, Acosta (Gooch 59), Kitchen (Williams 64), Kljestan, Bradley, Yedlin, Altidore (Boyd 88), Green (Agudelo 78).
**New Zealand:** Marinovic - Durante (Brotherton 58), Reid (Tzimopoulos 74), Boxall, Graham (Fenton 46), Lewis (Dyer 67), McGlinchey, Rojas (Cameron 46; Barbarouses 75), Colvey, Patterson, Wood.

# Club football

## AFRICA

### CAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

#### Final
**1st leg**
*Oct15*
**Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 3** (Laffor 31, Langerman 40, Gamal og 46)
**Zamalek (Egy) 0**
**HT:** 2-0. **Att:** 29,000. **Ref:** Omweno (Ken)
**Mamelodi Sundowns:** Onyango - Mbekile, Arendse (Soumahoro 70), Nthethe, Langerman, Mabunda, Kekana (T Zwane 85), Laffor, Tau, Dolly, Billiat (Modise 65).
**Zamalek:** El Shenawy (Gennesh 63) - Tawfik, Gabr, Gamal, Youssef, Hamed, Salah, Ohawuchi, Shikabala (Khaled 55), Morsy (M Fathy 75), Hefny.

**2nd leg**
*Oct 23*
**Zamalek 1** (Ohawuchi 64)
**Mamelodi Sundowns 0**
**HT:** 0-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)
*Mamelodi Sundowns 3-1 on agg*
**Zamalek:** Gennesh - Khaled (Shikabala 76), Gabr, Dewidar, Youssef, Tawfik, Hamed (Salah 85), M Fathy, Ohawuchi, Morsy, Hefny (Mayuka 85).
**Mamelodi Sundowns:** Onyango (Sandilands 29) - Mbekile, Nthethe, Soumahoro, Langerman, Kekana, Mabunda, Laffor (Modise 72), Tau, Dolly, Billiat (S Zwane 85).

### CONFEDERATION CUP

#### Semi-finals
*1st legs - Sep17/18; 2nd legs - Sep 25*
Etoile Sahel (Tun) v TP Mazembe (DRC)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, TP Mazembe on away goals)
MO Bejaia (Alg) v FUS Rabat (Mor)
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, MO Bejaia on away goals)

### MALI

**2016 – CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Std Malien (C) | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 14 |
| Real Bamako | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Djoliba | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Onze Createurs | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 |

### NIGERIA

**2016 – FINAL**

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enugu Rgrs (C) | 36 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 53 | 37 | 63 |
| Rivers United | 36 | 19 | 3 | 14 | 38 | 29 | 60 |
| Wikki Tourists | 36 | 16 | 9 | 11 | 45 | 28 | 57 |
| Ifeanyi Ubah | 36 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 37 | 33 | 56 |
| Lobi Stars | 36 | 16 | 7 | 13 | 41 | 35 | 55 |
| Sunshine Stars | 36 | 14 | 11 | 11 | 44 | 37 | 53 |
| Kano Pillars | 36 | 15 | 7 | 14 | 47 | 40 | 52 |
| Plateau Utd | 36 | 14 | 9 | 13 | 36 | 36 | 51 |
| El Kanemi W | 36 | 16 | 3 | 17 | 37 | 42 | 51 |
| Enyimba | 36 | 14 | 8 | 14 | 34 | 35 | 50 |
| Nasarawa Utd | 36 | 16 | 2 | 18 | 41 | 43 | 50 |
| Niger Tor'does | 36 | 15 | 4 | 17 | 40 | 42 | 49 |
| Abia Warriors | 36 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 35 | 39 | 48 |
| Akwa United | 36 | 13 | 8 | 15 | 45 | 46 | 47 |
| Shooting Stars | 36 | 14 | 5 | 17 | 41 | 48 | 47 |
| MFM | 36 | 12 | 9 | 15 | 36 | 40 | 45 |
| Warri Wvs (R) | 36 | 12 | 9 | 15 | 29 | 38 | 45 |
| Heartland (R) | 36 | 11 | 10 | 15 | 24 | 32 | 43 |
| Ikorodu U (R) | 36 | 7 | 11 | 18 | 32 | 55 | 32 |
| Giwa[1] (R) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1]*Results expunged after being expelled mid-season for failing to fulfil 3 fixtures*

## SUDAN

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Al Hilal Om (C) | 34 | 28 | 3 | 3 | 82 | 15 | 87 |
| Al Merreikh O | 34 | 24 | 5 | 5 | 65 | 29 | 77 |
| Al Ahli Sh'di | 34 | 23 | 4 | 7 | 68 | 25 | 73 |
| Al Hilal Ob | 34 | 20 | 10 | 4 | 48 | 21 | 70 |
| Khartoum | 34 | 18 | 11 | 5 | 51 | 22 | 65 |
| Al Hilal Kad'li | 34 | 15 | 8 | 11 | 39 | 35 | 53 |
| Merreikh El F | 34 | 12 | 9 | 13 | 33 | 38 | 45 |
| Merreikh Ny'a | 34 | 10 | 10 | 14 | 28 | 36 | 40 |
| Al Amal | 34 | 9 | 11 | 14 | 28 | 41 | 38 |
| Al Ahli Atbara | 34 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 26 | 44 | 37 |
| Al Ahli Wad M | 34 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 32 | 41 | 36 |
| Al Rabta | 34 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 34 | 45 | 35 |
| Merreikh Kosti | 34 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 22 | 42 | 35 |
| Al Nil | 34 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 27 | 53 | 33 |
| Al Ahli K'toum | 34 | 7 | 12 | 15 | 21 | 37 | 33 |
| Al Amir | 34 | 6 | 12 | 16 | 19 | 55 | 30 |
| Al Hilal El F | 34 | 7 | 8 | 19 | 23 | 45 | 29 |
| Al Nsor (R) | 34 | 4 | 10 | 20 | 18 | 40 | 22 |

# ASIA

## AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

### Semi-finals

*1st legs - Sep 27/28; 2nd legs - Oct18/19*

Al Ain (UAE) v El Jaish (Qat) 3-1, 2-2 (agg 5-3)
Jeonbuk Motors (SKo) v Seoul (SKo) 4-1, 1-2 (agg 5-3)

## AFC CUP

### Semi-finals

*1st legs - Sep 27/28; 2nd legs - Oct18/19*

Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq) v Al Ahed (Leb) 1-1, 3-2 (agg 4-3)
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mly) v Bengaluru (Ind) 1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4)

## AFGHANISTAN

### 2016 Championship Final

**Sep 30:** Shaheen Asmayee 2
De Maiwand Atalan 1.

## LAOS

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lanexang (C) | 26 | 24 | 1 | 1 | 92 | 14 | 73 |
| Lao Toyota | 26 | 22 | 1 | 3 | 85 | 11 | 67 |
| CSC Champa | 26 | 16 | 6 | 4 | 57 | 24 | 54 |
| EDL | 26 | 14 | 4 | 8 | 78 | 44 | 46 |
| NUOL | 26 | 14 | 2 | 10 | 43 | 36 | 44 |
| VSV United | 26 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 52 | 46 | 43 |
| Savan United | 26 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 59 | 36 | 41 |
| Lao Police | 26 | 8 | 3 | 15 | 45 | 54 | 27 |
| Lao Army | 26 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 41 | 57 | 26 |
| Ezra | 26 | 7 | 4 | 15 | 37 | 61 | 25 |
| Yng Elephant | 26 | 3 | 12 | 11 | 17 | 45 | 21 |
| Saythany City | 26 | 4 | 4 | 18 | 36 | 106 | 16 |
| Champasak U | 26 | 2 | 8 | 16 | 19 | 60 | 14 |
| Eastern Star | 26 | 4 | 2 | 20 | 24 | 91 | 14 |

## MALAYSIA

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Johor DT (C) | 22 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 56 | 14 | 58 |
| Felda United | 22 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 47 | 27 | 43 |
| Kedah | 22 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 29 | 29 | 37 |
| Kelantan | 22 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 37 | 33 | 29 |
| Selangor | 22 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 28 | 27 | 28 |
| Perak | 22 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 29 | 30 | 28 |
| T-Team | 22 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 30 | 34 | 27 |
| Sarawak | 22 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 32 | 40 | 24 |
| Pahang | 22 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 25 | 40 | 24 |
| Penang | 22 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 32 | 37 | 22 |
| PDRM (R) | 22 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 32 | 21 |
| Terengganu (R) | 22 | 5 | 4 | 13 | 21 | 44 | 19 |

## MONGOLIA

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Erchim (C) | 18 | 17 | 0 | 1 | 70 | 12 | 51 |
| Khangarid | 18 | 14 | 1 | 3 | 54 | 23 | 43 |
| Khoromkhon | 18 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 42 | 25 | 32 |
| Ulaanb'r Univ | 18 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 40 | 28 | 32 |
| Deren | 18 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 28 | 27 | 25 |
| FC Ulaanb'tar | 18 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 33 | 41 | 23 |
| Selenge Press | 18 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 43 | 40 | 22 |
| Ulaanb'r City | 18 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 32 | 32 | 21 |
| Bayangol (R) | 18 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 24 | 57 | 9 |
| Maz'nuud (R) | 18 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 9 | 90 | 1 |

# CONCACAF

## CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

### Group A

**Aug 3:** W Connection (T&T) 2 Pumas UNAM (Mex) 4.
**Aug 18:** Pumas UNAM 2 Progreso (Hnd) 0.
**Aug 25:** W Connection 1 Progreso 1.
**Sep 15:** Progreso 2 Pumas UNAM 1.
**Sep 29:** Progreso 1 W Connection 0.
**Oct 20:** Pumas UNAM 8 W Connection 1.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP A – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pumas (Q) | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 5 | 9 |
| Progreso | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| W Connect'n | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 1 |

### Group B

**Aug 3:** Portland Timbers (USA) 2 Dragon (ESv) 1.
**Aug 18:** Saprissa (CR) 6 Dragon 0.
**Aug 25:** Dragon 0 Saprissa 0.
**Sep 14:** Saprissa 4 Portland Timbers 2.
**Sep 27:** Dragon 1 Portland Timbers 2.
**Oct 19:** Portland Timbers 1 Saprissa 1.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP B – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saprissa (Q) | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 3 | 8 |
| Portland | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Dragon | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 1 |

### Group C

**Aug 2:** Central (T&T) 0 Vancouver Whitecaps (Can) 1.
**Aug 16:** Central 2 Kansas City (USA) 2.
**Aug 23:** Vancouver Whitecaps 3 Kansas City 0.
**Sep 13:** Kansas City 1 Vancouver Whitecaps 2.
**Sep 28:** Vancouver Whitecaps 4 Central 1.
**Oct 19:** Kansas City 3 Central 1.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP C – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vancouver (Q) | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| Kansas City | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4 |
| Central | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 1 |

### Group D

**Aug 3:** Don Bosco (Hai) 0 Monterrey (Mex) 3.
**Aug 17:** Monterrey 2 Arabe Unido (Pan) 3.
**Aug 24:** Don Bosco 2 Arabe Unido 5.
**Sep 14:** Arabe Unido 2 Monterrey 1.
**Sep 28:** Monterrey 3 Don Bosco 0.
**Oct 18:** Arabe Unido 2 Don Bosco 0.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP D – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabe U'do (Q) | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 5 | 12 |
| Monterrey | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 6 |
| Don Bosco | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 0 |

### Group E

**Aug 2:** Pachuca (Mex) 1 Olimpia (Hnd) 0.
**Aug 16:** Olimpia 4 Police United (Blz) 0.
**Aug 23:** Pachuca 3 Police United 0.
**Sep 13:** Police United 0 Pachuca 11.
**Sep 29:** Police United 1 Olimpia 5.
**Oct 19:** Olimpia 4 Pachuca 4.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP E – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pachuca (Q) | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 19 | 4 | 10 |
| Olimpia | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 6 | 7 |
| Police United | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 23 | 0 |

### Group F

**Aug 3:** New York Red Bulls (USA) 3 Antigua (Gtm) 0.
**Aug 16:** Alianza (ESv) 1 New York Red Bulls 1.
**Aug 23:** Alianza 1 Antigua 1.
**Sep 15:** New York Red Bulls 1 Alianza 0.
**Sep 27:** Antigua 0 New York Red Bulls 0.
**Oct 18:** Antigua 1 Alianza 3.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP F – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N York RB (Q) | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Alianza | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Antigua | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 2 |

### Group G

**Aug 4:** Plaza Amador (Pan) 1 Herediano (CR) 1.
**Aug 17:** Herediano 1 Tigres UANL (Mex) 3.
**Aug 24:** Tigres UANL 3 Plaza Amador 1.
**Sep 15:** Herediano 2 Plaza Amador 0.
**Sep 28:** Plaza Amador 1 Tigres UANL 0.
**Oct 18:** Tigres UANL 3 Herediano 0.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP G – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tigres (Q) | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 9 |
| Herediano | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 4 |
| Plaza Amador | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 |

### Group H

**Aug 4:** Dallas (USA) 2 Real Esteli (Nic) 1.
**Aug 18:** Suchitepequez (Gtm) 1 Real Esteli 0.
**Aug 24:** Real Esteli 1 Dallas 1.
**Sep 13:** Real Esteli 1 Suchitepequez 1.
**Sep 28:** Dallas 0 Suchitepequez 0.
**Oct 20:** Suchitepequez 2 Dallas 5.

| CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GP H – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dallas (Q) | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 8 |
| Suchit'quez | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| Real Esteli | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 |

● *Group winners have qualified for quarter-finals*

# EUROPE

## FAROE ISLANDS

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vikingur (C) | 27 | 19 | 4 | 4 | 59 | 25 | 61 |
| KI | 27 | 19 | 3 | 5 | 64 | 26 | 60 |
| NSI | 27 | 18 | 1 | 8 | 60 | 36 | 55 |
| B36 | 27 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 46 | 28 | 49 |
| HB | 27 | 12 | 7 | 8 | 44 | 30 | 43 |
| IF | 27 | 9 | 5 | 13 | 42 | 59 | 32 |
| TB | 27 | 7 | 6 | 14 | 31 | 48 | 27 |
| Skala | 27 | 6 | 8 | 13 | 25 | 41 | 26 |
| AB (R) | 27 | 4 | 6 | 17 | 31 | 49 | 18 |
| B68 (R) | 27 | 0 | 7 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 7 |

## FINLAND

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mariehamn (C) | 33 | 17 | 10 | 6 | 40 | 25 | 61 |
| HJK | 33 | 16 | 10 | 7 | 52 | 36 | 58 |
| SJK | 33 | 17 | 6 | 10 | 49 | 36 | 57 |
| VPS | 33 | 15 | 8 | 10 | 36 | 27 | 53 |
| Ilves | 33 | 15 | 7 | 11 | 36 | 35 | 52 |
| RoPS | 33 | 13 | 11 | 9 | 43 | 33 | 50 |
| KuPS | 33 | 14 | 7 | 12 | 37 | 31 | 49 |
| Lahti | 33 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 42 | 43 | 42 |
| PS Kemi | 33 | 10 | 5 | 18 | 29 | 48 | 35 |
| HIFK | 33 | 8 | 10 | 15 | 35 | 39 | 34 |
| Inter[1] | 33 | 7 | 11 | 15 | 28 | 41 | 32 |
| PK-35[2] (R) | 33 | 4 | 7 | 22 | 32 | 65 | 13 |

[1]*Enter rel/prom play-off* [2]*6pts deducted*

## ICELAND

| 2016 – FINAL | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FH (C) | 22 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 32 | 17 | 43 |
| Stjarnan | 22 | 12 | 3 | 7 | 43 | 31 | 39 |
| KR | 22 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 29 | 20 | 38 |
| Fjolnir | 22 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 42 | 25 | 37 |
| Valur | 22 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 41 | 28 | 35 |
| Breidablik | 22 | 10 | 5 | 7 | 27 | 20 | 35 |
| Vikingur R | 22 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 29 | 32 | 32 |
| IA | 22 | 10 | 1 | 11 | 28 | 33 | 31 |
| IBV | 22 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 23 | 27 | 23 |
| Vikingur O | 22 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 23 | 38 | 21 |
| Fylkir (R) | 22 | 4 | 7 | 11 | 25 | 40 | 19 |
| Throttur (R) | 22 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 19 | 50 | 14 |

# SOUTH AMERICA

## SUDAMERICANA CUP

### 3rd round

(holders Santa Fe entered at this stage)
*1st legs - Sep 20-22; 2nd legs - Sep 27-29*
Coritiba (Bra) v Belgrano (Arg) 1-2, 2-1 (agg 3-3, Coritiba 4-3 on pens); Independiente (Arg) v Chapecoense (Bra) 0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, Chapecoense 5-4 on pens); Indep Medellin (Col) v Santa Cruz (Bra) 2-0, 1-3 (agg 3-3, Indep Medellin on away goals); M Wanderers (Uru) v Junior (Col) 0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, Junior 4-3 on pens); Palestino (Chl) v Flamengo (Bra) 0-1, 2-1 (agg 2-2, Palestino on away goals); San Lorenzo (Arg) v Dep La Guaira (Ven) 2-1, 2-0 (agg 4-1); Santa Fe (Col) v Cerro Porteno (Par) 2-0, 1-4 (agg 3-4); Sol de America (Par) v Atletico Nacional (Col) 1-1, 0-2 (agg 1-3)

**KEY TO TABLES**
(C) = champions (R) = relegated
(Q) = qualified for next stage

**December 2016 Vol 57 No 3**

**EDITOR** Gavin Hamilton
**ASSISTANT EDITOR** Nich Hills
**DESIGN DIRECTOR** Kevin Eason
**DESIGN EDITOR** Jamie Latchford
**DEPUTY DESIGN EDITOR** Daniel Franklin
**PICTURE EDITOR** Duncan Bond
**NEWS EDITOR** Jamie Rainbow
**EDITORIAL SECRETARY** Jacqui Mujico

**PICTURES**
Pictures copyright: Press Association Images, Getty Images, Action Images and Reuters

**Thanks this issue to**
Dean Chillmaid, Debbie Millett, Peter Neish

**EDITORIAL**
Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hants GU14 7BF
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555255

**ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP**
Matthew Johnston
Tel: +44 (0) 1252 555367
E-mail: matthew.johnston@timeinc.com

**PRODUCTION MANAGER** Becky Singleton
**MANAGING DIRECTOR** Simon Owen
**GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR** Oswin Grady

**International licensing enquiries**
+44 (0) 20 314 85490
E-mail: bianca.hamilton-foster@timeinc.com

Time Inc.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS ORDER HOTLINE**
**+44 (0)844 848 0848**
E-mail: ipcsubs@qss-uk.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES**
Annual sub is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £61.34 Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 98.85 euros (airmail) USA: $144.48 (airmail) Rest of world: £99.25 (airmail)

Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ Postmaster: send address changes to *World Soccer*, c/o MAIL America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel NJ 07001, USA. USPS004075

**SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT**
Rockwood House, 9-17 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH, England Tel: +44 (0) 1444 475 675

WorldSoccer is a member of ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

● A Bola (Portugal) ● De Telegraaf (Holland)
● Elf'Voetbal (Holland) ● Fanatik (Turkey)
● Frankfurter Allgemeine (Germany)
● Goal News (Greece) ● Kicker (Germany)
● Marca (Spain) ● Nemzeti Sport (Hungary)
● So Foot (France) ● Sport-Express (Russia)
● Sport/Foot (Belgium) ● TIPS Bladet (Denmark)
● World Soccer (UK)

● Titan Sport (China) ● KickOff (S Africa)
● Netease (China) ● SportalKorea (S Korea)

World Soccer's GREAT MATCHES

JULY 10, 1994, USA: WORLD CUP QUARTER-FINAL

# Bulgaria 2 Germany 1

## Letchkov and Co. down the world champions at Giants Stadium

Winner...a header from Yordan Letchkov (in red, on ground) beats Bodo Illgner

Having lost 3-0 to Nigeria in their opening game of the finals, few people would have fancied Bulgaria's chances against the reigning world champions in New York's Giants Stadium for a place in the last four of the 1994 World Cup.

However, as the August 1994 edition of World Soccer commented: "With a shudder and a crash heard all around the football world, the Germans and all their superstar names – Matthaus, Klinsmann, Voller, Hassler, etc – were toppled from their perch.

"Goals from Hristo Stoichkov and Yordan Letchkov in the last 15 minutes dismissed Germany at a stage in which they had not been stopped short since their defeat by Yugoslavia in Chile a full 32 years ago."

It was pointed out how "Balakov was all over midfield, ticking away, always available to help out the more stately Letchkov and the excited overlaps of Kiryakov and Tsvetanov". But it was Germany who had initially gone ahead, and "at that point, only one outcome appeared possible".

The report continued: "Bulgaria had proved before that they possess remarkable depths of spirit and stamina, and they immediately reacted with all a counter-puncher's spirit."

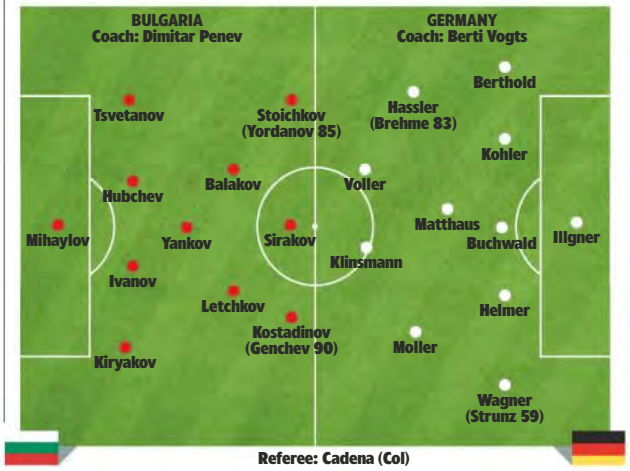
Two minutes, after Germany had a goal ruled out for offside, "Buchwald brought down Stoichkov, who curled a superb free-kick over the wall and past Illgner's left hand. Then Bulgaria, apparently against all the odds, pulled ahead.

"Yankov crossed from the right after a corner and Letchkov dived to head in."

The holders had been knocked out by a man who played in Germany for Hamburg, and who had been the first Bulgarian to appear in the Bundesliga.

But there was to be no dream finale for Letchkov and Bulgaria – they lost 2-1 to Italy in the semi-finals. WS

Battle...Bulgaria's Petar Hubchev (left) and Rudi Voller




Referee: Cadena (Col)

## KEY MOMENTS

Spot on...Lothar Matthaus opens the scoring

**14min** Good work by Yordan Letchkov feeds Hristo Stoichkov, who cuts the ball back to Krassimir Balakov, but his shot from the edge of the penalty area hits a post.

**25min** A cross from the right by Thomas Hassler is met by an unmarked Jurgen Klinsmann on the edge of the six-yard box, but his diving header is saved by Borislav Mihaylov at point-blank range.

**32min** Lothar Matthaus lofts a long ball out of defence, Hassler crosses from the left and Andreas Moller drives a shot from 25 yards which Trifon Ivanov blocks with his body.

**47min** Klinsmann is fouled by Letchkov and the referee awards a penalty. Matthaus makes no mistake from the spot. **0-1**

**73min** Hassler sets up Moller, whose powerful shot hits a post and Rudi Voller is on hand to tuck away the rebound, only for the Colombian linesman to flag for offside.

Level...Hristo Stoichkov

**75min** A Stoichkov free-kick floats over the German wall and inside Bodo Illgner's near post. **1-1**

**78min** Zlatko Yankov crosses from the right and Letchkov gets in front of Hassler to direct a powerful diving header beyond Bodo Illgner. **2-1**

Hero...Yordan Letchkov celebrates his goal

NEXT MONTH ISSUE ON SALE DECEMBER 2

"Art of Football bring out
the beauty in the game's most
memorable moments" Copa90

"Art of Football capture classic
moments in a vibrant,
contemporary style" The Guardian

"Art of Football get it.
those split-second moments
are treasured memories and their
artwork captures them in a
classy and stylish way" Ball Street

"Art of Football's shirts capture
the vibrancy of the game
like no other" Dirty Tackle

"Art of Football - where the
beautiful game comes to life"
Hitesh Ratna, Editor, FourFourTwo

"The Art of Football team create
truly unique and authentic content
that is designed to emotionally connect
real fans to the biggest moments
in the game" Adidas Uk

Art-of-football.com

PRO:DIRECT
SOCCER

GAME ON, GAME OVER

NEW BALANCE VISARO & FURON 2.0

www.prodirectsoccer.com